

# CHANDAMAMA

NOVEMBER 1994

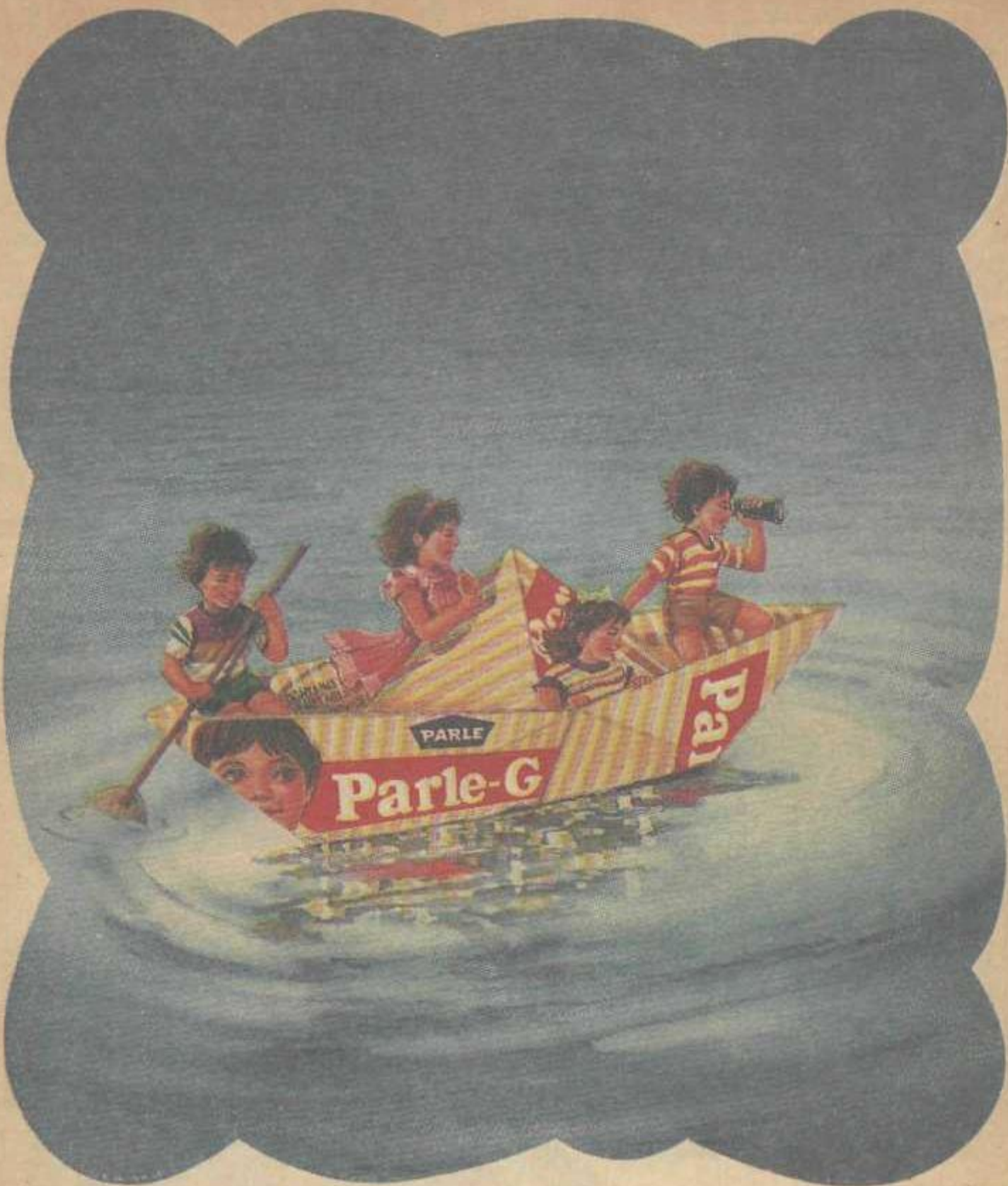
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# CHANDAMAMA

## IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 25 NOVEMBER 1994 No. 5

### Stories

Adventures Of Ulysses-2 .... Page 19

Two Questions .... Page 25

One And The Ninety-nine .... Page 37

### Stories From

The Mahabharata-2 .... Page 43

A Journey With A Difference .... Page 51

Cure For A Malady .... Page 56

A Ghostly Wish .... Page 61

### Picture Stories :

Panchatantra-47 .... Page 14

Builder Of The First Motor Car .... Page 55

### Features :

An Invasion Avoided .... Page 10

Supplement-73 .... Page 33

Sports Snippets .... Page 40

The Solar System .... Page 42

World Of Nature .... Page 50

And News Flash, Towards Better English  
And More!

## NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 25 DECEMBER 1994 No. 6

**THE MAHABHARATA :** Janamejaya is told how his father Parikshit met with his death. After he is crowned king, his ministers persuade him to marry Vapushti, daughter of the King of Kasi. Both of them conduct the *Sarpayaga* to annihilate the entire snake world led by Takshaka and Vasuki. The latter's nephew, Asthik, praises Janamejaya and ensures that the *yaga* is stopped. The snakes are saved. Vaishampayan, the disciple of Veda Vyas, tells those present at the *yaga* how the land of Bharat was once ruled by Nakusha, the son of Ayus and grandson of Pururavas. Nakusha conducted a hundred *yagas* and acquired immense power. His eldest son, Yati, renounced the world and went for *tapas*; so the second son, Yayati, became the ruler. Sukracharya, the preceptor of the demons, knew the *sanjeevani mantra*. Whenever the asuras got killed by the devas, the acharya could bring them back to life with the help of the *mantra*.

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Controlling Editor :  
NAGI REDDI



Founder :  
CHAKRAPANI

## ***HOW MUCH OF HISTORY?***

History is generally described as a record of past events and life-sketches of people who guided or moulded or were instrumental to those events. As such, history is the very soul of a nation and, therefore, it is necessarily a part of the school curriculum.

Unfortunately, these days students do not have adequate time to know about their country's ancient civilization and history. So crammed is their curriculum that they have to be contented with some superficial details – mostly centering round the rulers and a few heroes and the battles they waged and won or got defeated in.

But one's knowledge of history will not be complete if one is unaware of the course history took in at least some of the other leading nations of the world. This calls for the formation of a curriculum which provides for a comparative study of the growth of nations.

The ideal method will be to introduce into the syllabus the history of one nation other than one's own for study every year. Between the fifth standard and tenth, a student will thus get an opportunity to know about six nations, besides India.

A balanced curriculum is definitely the need of the day.



## An Invasion Avoided



October 15 is a red letter day for the Caribbean nation of Haiti and its people. For, on this day, their popular leader, Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, returned from exile to take over as the country's first democratically elected President. Since 1991 and till a few months ago, a transition from the rule by a military Junta to a democratic form of government had appeared a remote possibility. Things began moving fast with the U.S.A. applying pressure on the leader of the Junta, Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras, and even threatening an invasion, which everybody knew would last just a few hours.

The former U.S. President, Mr. Jimmy Carter, undertook a peace mission and almost succeeded in prevailing upon the Junta to see the writing on the wall and to accept the offer of safe passage out of the country for them and a general amnesty for all acts of omission and commission during their three-year rule, which the Haitians felt was simply oppressive. Lt. Gen. Cedras resigned on October 12, paving the way for the return of Mr. Aristide, who had been elected President in the first democratic elections held in 1990 but ousted from power seven months after he assumed office.

Haiti was discovered five hundred years ago by Christopher Columbus in the same year (1492) as he discovered America. He called the Caribbean island, south east of Cuba, Hispaniola, meaning little Spain. The native Red Indians called it Haiti and this name has prevailed over the western side of the island, while the eastern side is a separate nation called the Dominican Republic.

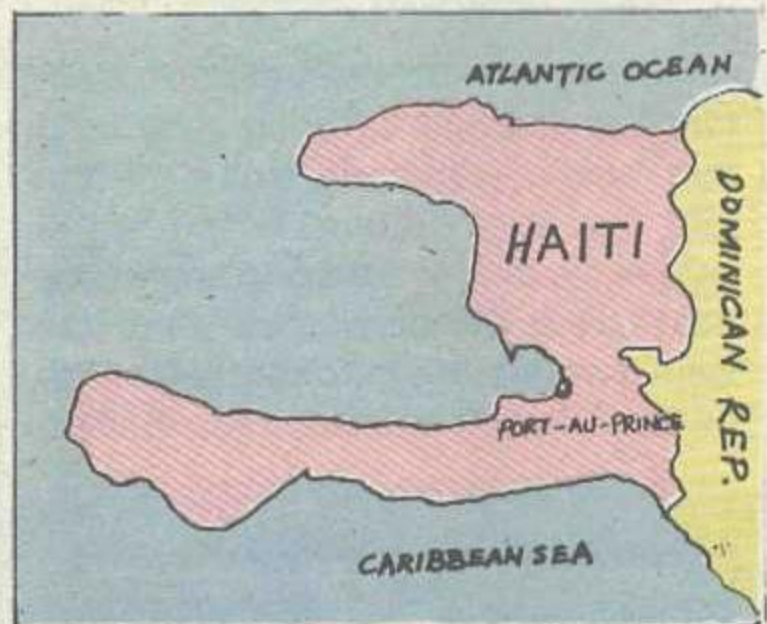
Columbus's description of the beautiful island after his return home brought a stream of Spanish colonizers who gradually wiped out the Indians. Towards the close of the 17th century, Spain ceded Haiti to France. During the French Revolution in late 18th century, a clamour for independence arose in several French colonies, and Haiti was one of them. It is said, Napoleon sent troops to restore the French authority, but the soldiers ran away from the island afraid of becoming victims of yellow fever that raged there. Soon after that, on New Year day in 1804, Haiti declared its independence.

In 1951, Haiti came under U.S. occupation which continued for nearly two decades. A series of coups took place before 1957 when Dr. Francois Duvalier came to power. "Papa Doc", as he was called, died in 1971 and his son "Baby Doc" — Jean-Claude



Duvalier succeeded him. He declared himself President for life, which was resented to by the people. He was forced to flee the country in 1986. The military leader, Lt. Gen. Namphy, however, failed to bring in a democratic system that he had promised the people. He was ousted in 1988. He staged a second coup six months later, but was again replaced. A civilian government then came to power, but the real masters were the army.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide was born into a poor agricultural family of Port-au-Salute. His father died when he was still a little boy, and he and his mother moved over to capital Port-au-Prince, where Jean studied in a Catholic school. It was then that he became aware of the sufferings of the people. He became a priest in early '80s, but stayed with the poor in their slums. They considered him as their apostle, and arrayed behind him against the dictatorial rule of the Duvalier family. Aristide was the first Haitian leader who dared oppose the Duvalier regime in public. His activities against the government angered the church and he was sent out of the Catholic society. He was accused of fomenting racial uprising. In 1990, when elections were announced, Aristide expressed doubts whether they would be really fair and free and said he would boycott them. However, at the eleventh hour, he announced his candidature and defeated his strong opponent by a huge majority.



President Aristide was generally taken to be of leftist leanings and so, the U.S.A. did not see eye to eye with him or his policies and actions to uplift the downtrodden people. The rightists, supported by the army, soon plotted to overthrow him. When this happened in 1991, the U.S.A. did not hesitate to take the cudgel against the military rulers and has since been trying to bring them to their knees and restore democracy.

Around September 15, President Bill Clinton served an ultimatum on the military leaders to step down. Haiti's strongman, the army commander Lt. Gen. Cedras, said, if there was an invasion, "I will not go; I will defend my country."

The U.S. President enlisted the services of Mr. Jimmy Carter to persuade the defiant rulers to surrender power. The first round of talks in Haiti was not quite successful. The clock ticked for the Haitians, who began to flee in their thousands. Though the first contingent of U.S. troops landed in Haiti on September 19, an invasion was avoided at the eleventh hour. Lt. General Cedras and the members of the Junta agreed to step down by October 15, in exchange for a general amnesty for all of them. Mr. Aristide said: "On behalf of my nation, many thanks (to the U.S.A) for joining in this endeavour of peace." He was greeted with a 21-gun salute when his plane landed in the Haitian capital.

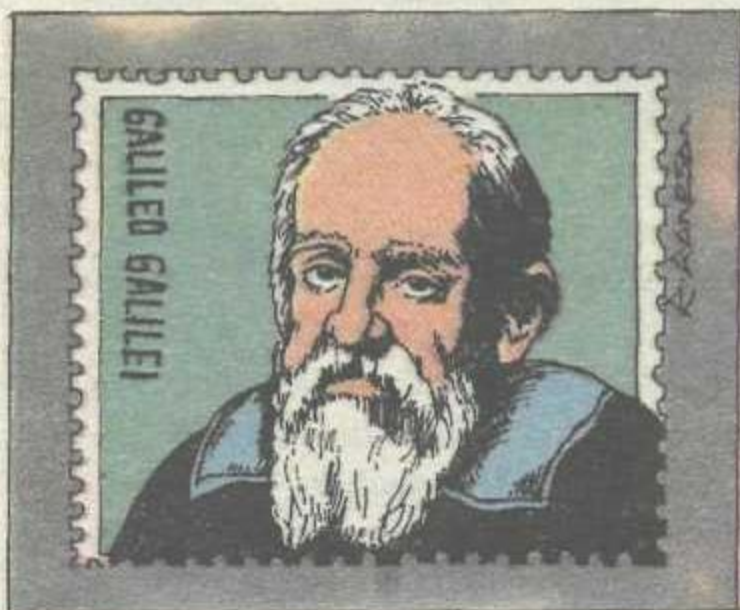




## NEWS FLASH

### Punishment first, honour later

Of interest to not only stamp collectors but students of geography (and that means everybody, isn't it?) is the fact that the Vatican, which is the smallest nation in the world and where the Pope is Citizen Number One, has issued two stamps in honour of the 17th century Italian astronomer, Galileo



Galilei, whom it had punished with imprisonment. One of his discoveries was that the earth was not the centre of the solar system as the Roman Catholic Church believed and was telling the people. He said it is the sun (as readers of *Chandamama* have been reading in the feature called THE SOLAR SYSTEM), which is the centre and hence the description 'solar system'.

Galileo was condemned and was forced to withdraw his statement. In 1633, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. This was later converted to house arrest, which he suffered for eight years before he died in 1642. Galileo's discovery was subsequently accepted by the world of science. However, the Vatican honour has come three-and-a-half centuries after his death.

### Man, nearest to chimp

Following the discovery of the fossil of a big tooth, scientists have found the remains of a creature resembling a



chimpanzee, which they claim to be the earliest link connecting human beings with their ape ancestors. According to them, the ape-man must have roamed the woodlands of Ethiopia (in Africa) some 4,400,000 years ago. Mr. Tim White, of the University of California, says: "For the first time, we've seen a human ancestor in such a wooded environment." His theory is, the creature was closely related to the last ancestor of both humans and chimps. Also that man is more closely related to chimpanzees than gorillas.



## Singing from a peak

Ritxard Gonzalez was a member of a Spanish mountaineering team



heading for the 8,047 metre high False Broad peak in northern Pakistan. He did not reach the top, unlike his mate Patxi Ibarbia, but he achieved something else and that is a record. This Rock star sat down when he reached 8,030 metres and recorded a song for the Spanish TV. What shall we call it? The 'highest' song or 'highest' recording? This happened on July 23 last.

## Climbing on crutches

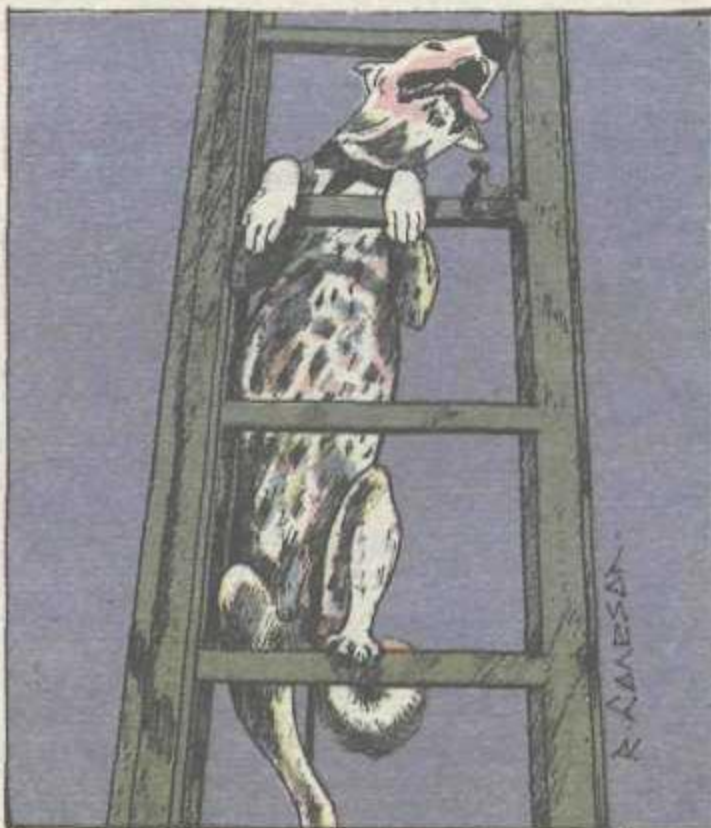
But this one is a real mountaineering record. And the hero is India's first physically handicapped mountaineer, Baba Mahindra Pal. On August 30, he scaled the 24,130 feet high Abi-Gamin in Garhwal Himalayas—a world record for a man on crutches. The earlier record (23,600 ft.) stood in the name of Norman Croucher, of the U.S.A., who had

climbed the Nun peak with an artificial leg.



## Another climbing record

Two-year-old Gina did not climb any mountain, but the dog has created a world record by climbing a ladder up to 25.80 metres—in Saint Andiol, France, in September.





THE TREACHEROUS WIFE AND HER LOVER PUSH THE BRAHMIN INTO THE WELL.

GOOD RIDDANCE!



SHE THEN CARRIES THE CRIPPLE TO THE KING'S PRESENCE.

WHO'RE YOU?... WHO IS THIS CRIPPLE?



HE'S MY HUSBAND, YOUR MAJESTY! WE FALL AT YOUR GRACIOUS FEET.



WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?



HIS ENEMIES HAVE CRIPPLED HIM AND THEY'RE PURSUING US!



I GIVE YOU MY PROTECTION. NO HARM SHALL BEFALL HIM. YOU MAY LIVE HERE IN COMFORT AND SAFETY.



MEANWHILE, THE BRAHMIN COMES OUT OF THE WELL AND TRACES HIS UNFAITHFUL WIFE TO THE CITY. HE GOES TO THE KING.



YOUR MAJESTY! THERE HE IS, THE DREADED ENEMY OF MY HUSBAND.

O' KING! KINDLY LISTEN TO ME. ACTUALLY I AM HER HUSBAND. SHE CHEATED ME AND...

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, SIRE. HE'S LYING. HE'S A CHEAT.

HANG HIM!



Let a king avoid choosing men who have no relations; such men have no attachments, and therefore, have no fear of crime.

—Thirukkural



BALIVARDHA CONCLUDES THE STORY THUS...



THE POOR BRAHMIN, WHO HAD LEFT HIS LOVING PARENTS FOR THE SAKE OF HIS WIFE, WAS CRUELLY CHEATED BY HER.

SO, NEVER TRUST A WOMAN!



AND LISTEN TO THIS FUNNY STORY.



LET ME HEAR IT, PLEASE.



THERE WAS ONCE A MIGHTY MONARCH NAMED MAHANANDA...

... BEFORE WHOM PRINCES AND CHIEFTAINS USED TO BOW THEIR HEADS IN OBEISANCE.



HE HAD A MINISTER WHO, THOUGH A MASTER OF ALL SCIENCES AND STATECRAFT, COULD NEVER BRING ROUND HIS QUARRELsome WIFE.



ONE DAY, IN THE MINISTER'S HOUSE...



MY DEAR, I'M TIRED OF THESE BRAWLS AND BICKERINGS. PRAY, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO TO GIVE US A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL LIFE?

THESE MEN ARE ALL FOOLS. YES, YES, I AGREE WITH YOU.



Even falsehood is of the nature of Truth, if it confers a benefit that is free from fault.



PLEASE TELL ME HOW I CAN  
MAKE YOU HAPPY.

SHALL I TELL YOU?... HAVE  
YOUR HEAD SHAVEN CLEAN,  
THEN BOW BEFORE ME.



IMMEDIATELY THE MINIS-  
TER DOES AS SHE DE-  
SIRED...

NOW I'M HAPPY!



THE SAME DAY—THE KING,  
TOO, HAS A QUARREL WITH  
HIS QUEEN AND CANNOT  
MAKE PEACE WITH HER.

PLEASE SMILE ONCE, AND I'LL  
BE HAPPY. WHY ARE YOU  
ALWAYS ANGRY, MY DEAR?



BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS  
PROVOKE ME.



WHAT SHALL I DO TO  
PLEASE YOU?



ARE YOU PREPARED TO DO  
ANYTHING FOR ME?

CERTAINLY! AND AT ONCE.  
PLEASE TELL ME



THEN TAKE A BIT IN YOUR  
MOUTH; I SHALL MOUNT ON  
YOUR BACK, AND YOU MUST  
TROT ABOUT, NEIGHING LIKE A  
HORSE.



Goodness of mind will give wealth to men; good society will bring  
with it all praise.





THE GREAT KING OBEYS  
THE ORDER OF HIS UNRE-  
LENTING CONSORT.



NEXT MORNING, IN THE  
KING'S COUNCIL CHAM-  
BER

MY DEAR MINISTER! WHAT'S  
THE MATTER WITH YOU? WHY  
HAVE YOU GOT YOUR HEAD  
SHAVEN CLEAN?



YOUR MAJESTY! WHAT WON'T  
A MAN DO FOR HIS WOMAN?!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



HE SOMETIMES SHAVES HIS  
HEAD CLEAN AND SOMETIMES  
CARRIES HER ON HIS BACK, LIKE  
A HORSE.



BALIVARDHA FINISHES HIS  
NARRATION THUS...

YOU'RE A NUMSKULL AND A  
HEN-PECKED WRETCH. TO  
PLEASE YOUR WIFE, YOU  
TRIED TO KILL A FRIEND.



PLEASE LISTEN TO ME! I  
WAS JUST JOKING.



SHUT UP! YOU FAILED BE-  
CAUSE YOU HAVE A WAG-  
GING TONGUE. SILENCE IS  
ALWAYS GOLDEN; SPEECH  
CAN BETRAY YOU.



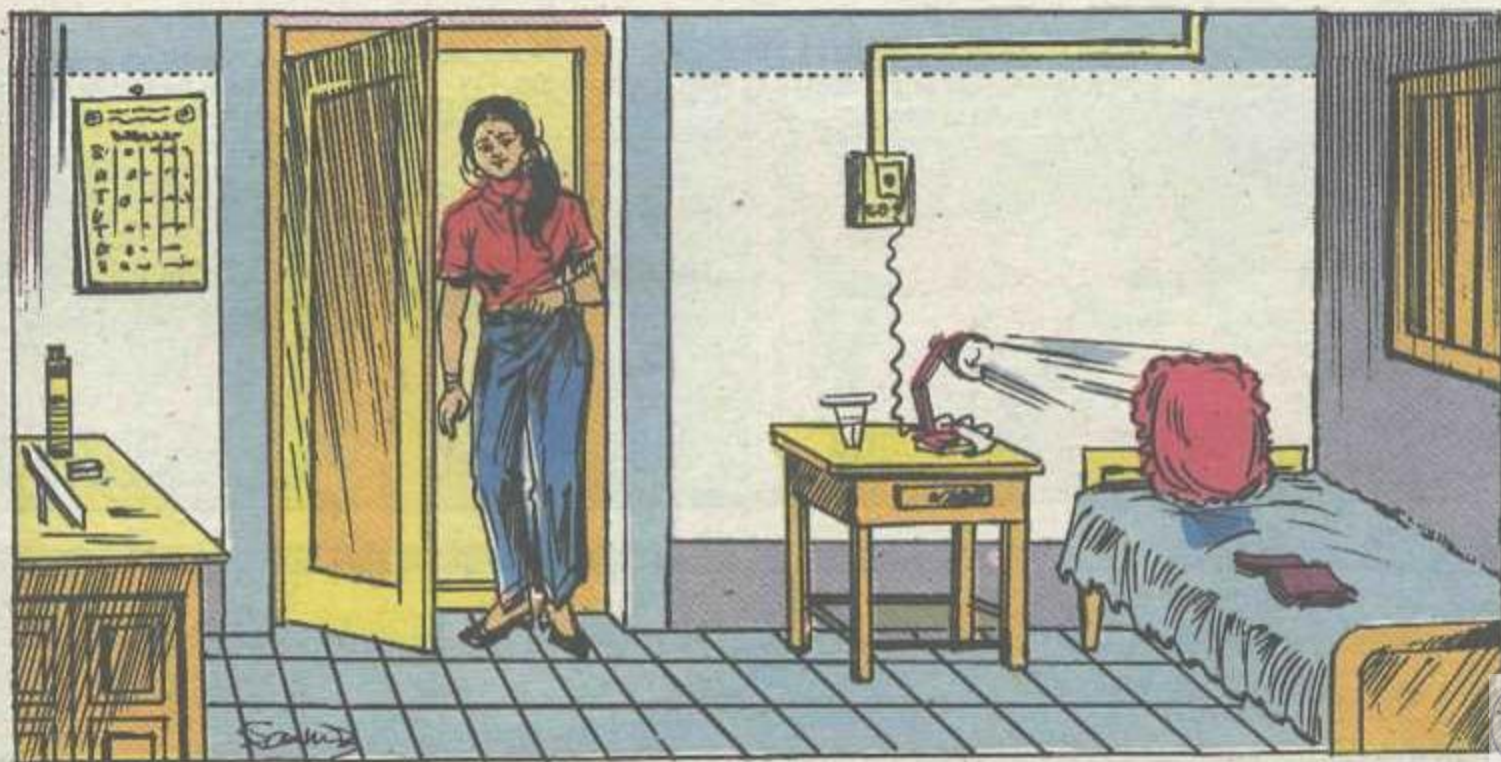
Wisdom appears to rest in the mind, but it really exists, to a man, in  
his companions.



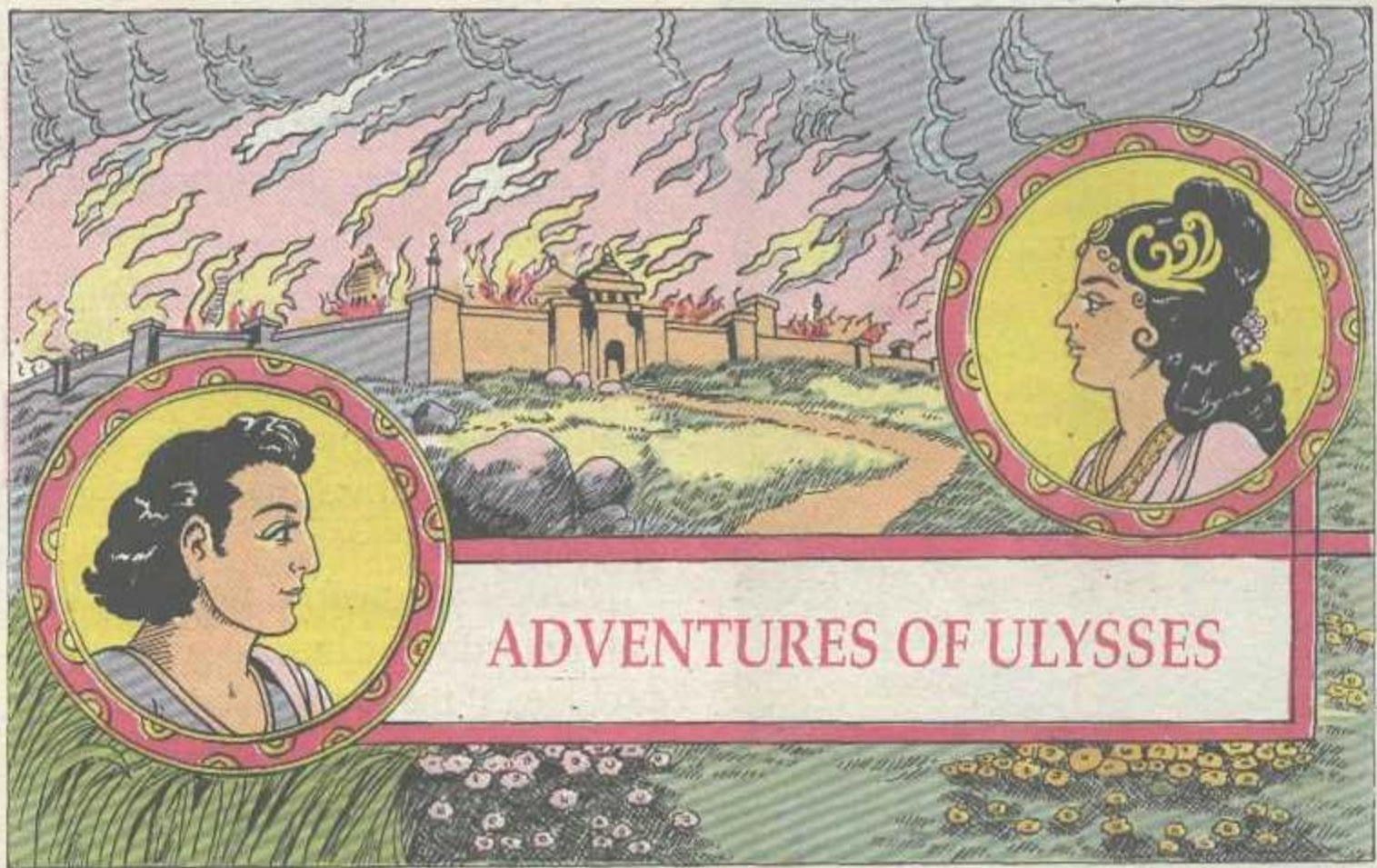
## Apparently only a hairline difference!

Reader S. Sumitra, of Bangalore, wants to know the difference between 'obviously' and 'evidently'. Obviously she is confused about their usage! Otherwise she would not have posed that question. Well, if she barges into her friend's room in the hostel, after not getting an answer to her knock and finding the door ajar, she finds that obviously her friend had been studying, and evidently she was reading in her bed as the table lamp had been turned towards the cot, the textbook and notes were lying on the bed, and the pillow was leaning against the wall. Her flask was not on the table where she had seen it often; obviously she must have run to the hostel canteen to get it filled. But it was only a conjecture; her friend might have even loaned it to another hosteler. Apparently (a similar expression), there is only a hairline difference between the two words.

Who is a statesman? And who a politician? asks Durmada Ku. of Majhi, in Orissa. The difference is very obvious, isn't it? In India, we have very few statesmen but many politicians; also politicians who became statesmen. Someone joins a political party and may remain a mere member. But when he makes politics his job — like a member of parliament, with something to do with the government of his country, he becomes a politician. When such a politician becomes a Prime Minister or President, he rises to the stature of a statesman, and he is no more a mere politician or a member of a political party. With this yardstick, Reader Durmada can easily find out who among the present politicians in India are also statesmen. Now, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who was one-time our President, was a statesman, not a politician; he was also not a member of any political party.







*(Who is the most beautiful of the three goddesses—Venus, Athene and Hera? The young Prince Paris is called upon to judge. His opinion goes in favour of Venus who has promised that the world's most beautiful woman shall become his wife.)*

**T**he King of Sparta had a daughter who was so beautiful that no poet could have described her beauty, no painter could have drawn her figure on canvas, and no ornament could have added to her charm. As she grew up, her beauty was sung by minstrels in lands far and near.

Her name was Helen.

"My lord, a prince from the neighbourhood wishes to be our guest for a few days," one day the

minister informed the king.

"He is welcome!" said the king.

"My lord, we have two more princes today!" the minister informed the king the next day.

"Look after them properly," said the king.

But on the third day there were three more princes. They all met the king with some gifts, one after another, but none of them told him the purpose of his visit.

## 2. CRISIS BEGINS







By and by it became known that they were all most eager to steal glimpses of Princess Helen or to exchange a few words with her or at least to have her company for a moment if that was possible.

'Well, well, my daughter has grown into a prize bride!' the king observed.

But his minister was not amused. "My lord," he asked, "our princess can marry only one of them, am I right?"

"Any fool can be right on that issue. I don't need my wise minister to make such a common-place observation!"

"Pardon me, my lord. But it requires some wisdom to foresee what will happen once the princess does that!" commented the minister.

The king's smile vanished. He now began to see the shape of things to come. All the disappointed princes would rise against Sparta. They might even harass the prince who would marry Helen.

"Don't you worry, my lord. We can only do our best to avoid any problem. If the problem comes even then, we must do our best to solve it," said the minister, now smiling himself to pull the king out of his gloom.

Among the suitors of Helen was Prince Ulysses of Ithaca. The king and his minister knew that he was a brave young man who had high respect for justice. They called him and put their dilemma before him.

Ulysses thought for a while and said, "Let Helen herself choose her husband. We will make all her suitors take an oath that they will honour her choice and be friends with the bride and the bridegroom."

The king and his minister greatly appreciated the idea. The suitors were summoned and they were told about it. They agreed to abide by this code of conduct.

Needless to say, each of the suit-





ors hoped that Helen would choose him. But Helen chose none of these strangers, not even Ulysses who was well known for his bravery and wisdom. She chose Menelaus, a prince who lived in Sparta for a long time along with his brother Agamemnon. Both had fled their own kingdom after their father's death because there was a conspiracy to kill them.

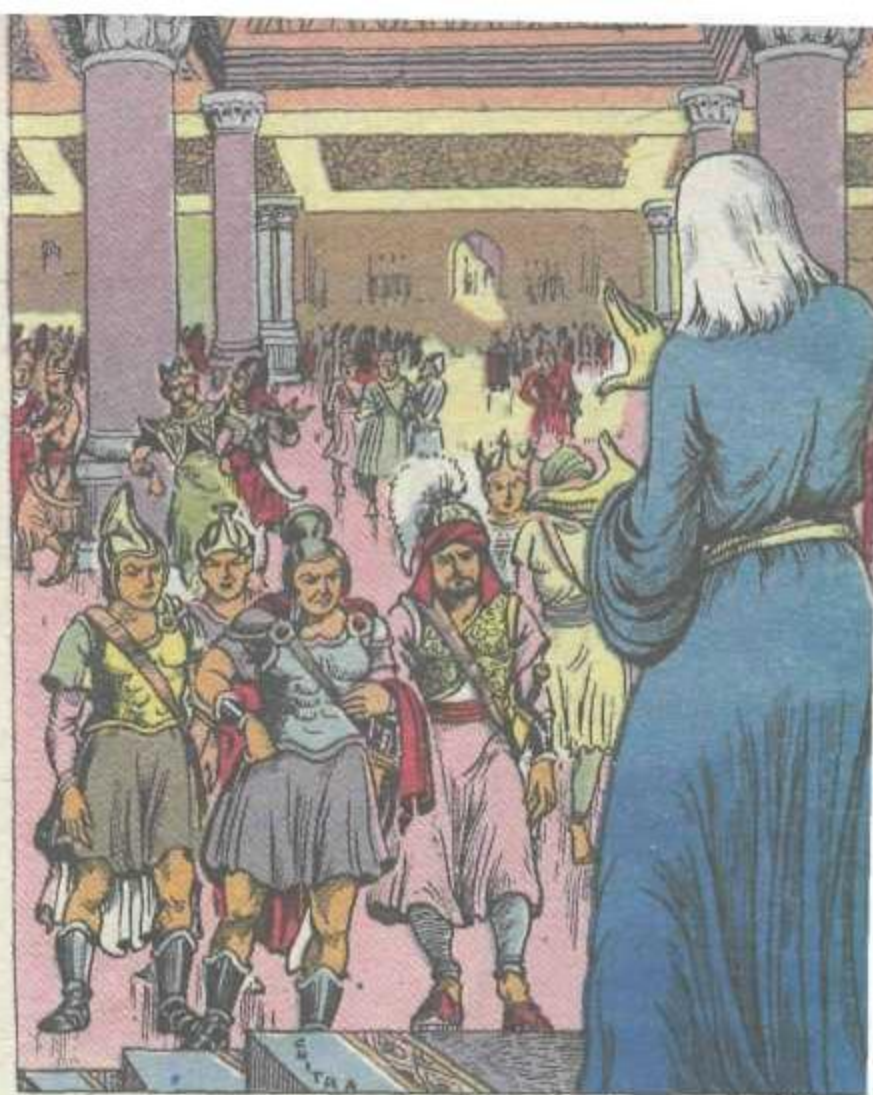
Menelaus and Helen were married. Soon after that Agamemnon went back to his father's kingdom and defeated his enemies and occupied the throne. Helen's father died before long. As a result, Menelaus became the King of Sparta.

Menelaus and Helen were a happy couple. They would have remained so till the end of their life if Paris had not been promised by Venus that the most beautiful woman would become his wife!

One day, a fine looking ship came sailing across the blue ocean. Helen who stood on the roof of her palace could see the young man who descended from the ship and soon reached the palace.

'Prince Paris! Son of the mighty king, Priam!' exclaimed Menelaus when he recognised the visitor.

"You are most welcome. Tell me without hesitation if I can help you



in any way in fulfilling your mission," Menelaus added, while introducing Paris to his wife, Helen.

Paris looked at Helen and was about to step back with wonder. At once he knew that he had come to the end of his mission! A mad zeal to locate the most beautiful woman had led him from land to land, from harbour to harbour. He had found her at last. There was no question of his continuing with his mission any longer.

"My noble host, it is nothing but the thrill in knowing new lands and meeting strange people that has brought me here. It is so good of







you to receive me so kindly!" said Paris.

"Prince Paris! I know something about your strange life, how you were abandoned in your childhood and grew up in the wilderness, how you defeated all the participants in a tournament in Sparta and how your sister alone recognised you. No other prince in Greece has a life comparable to yours. Who won't feel honoured to host you?" said Menelaus enthusiastically.

Paris continued to be there, going for hunting with Menelaus, playing with him or swimming and riding with him. Days passed. But,

unknown to anybody, the magic and the spell which Venus had passed on to Paris were at work.

They were working on Helen's mind, too. She never showed it, but she felt attracted towards him as strongly as a moth would feel towards a flame.

It so happened that Menelaus had to go out on an urgent business to a distant island.

"My friend," he told Paris while setting out, "please feel free at home. You must not go away before I'm back."

"Thank you, my noble host, but how can your castle be the same to me without you? So please don't be too late," said Paris.

"I have instructed my wife to take great care of you so that you don't miss me. In any case, I won't be too long," said Menelaus.

Alas, he was too late. Back in Sparta, when he reached his castle, his heart filled with joy at the thought of being greeted by his dear friend Paris and his beloved wife Helen. But he found everybody—from the gate-keeper to his minister—looking gloomy.

"Isn't all well? Where is my noble guest Prince Paris? How is my queen Helen?" he asked the chief maid who





had come out to greet him with tearful eyes.

"Both, my lord, are gone!" she replied, her head hung.

"What do you mean? Are they dead?" demanded Menelaus.

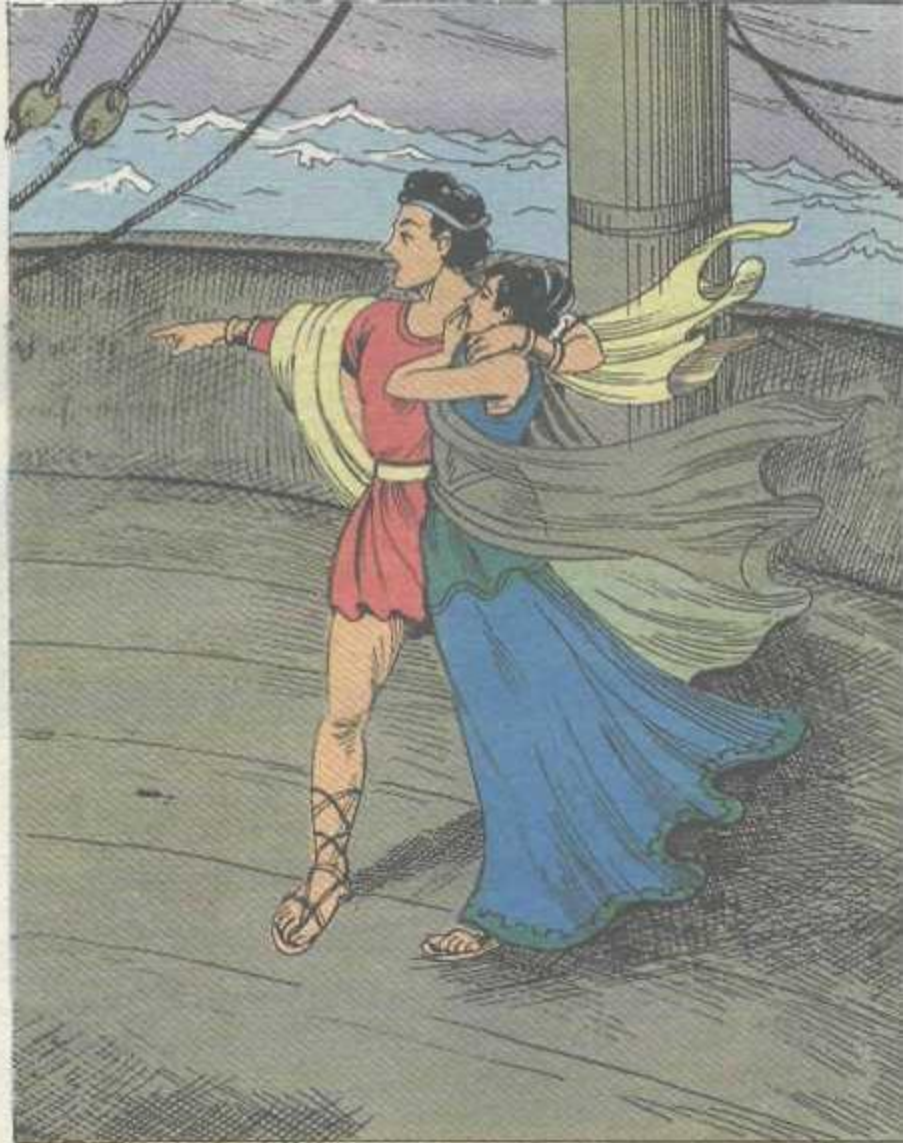
"It may be worse than that, my lord. I'm afraid both have betrayed you and betrayed us. The guest left—it seems along with the queen—amidst the silence of the night some days ago."

At first Menelaus could not believe his own ears. How on earth could this be possible? By and by he realised that much that seems impossible becomes possible on this earth! In a few days, his spies confirmed that Paris and Helen had indeed gone away together. Sailing away to an island, they had got married. Then Paris had led Helen to his father's fort in Troy.

Menelaus met Ulysses, the only man who, he believed, could give him sound advice.

"Such a wrong by Paris cannot be pardoned by King Priam and the elders in Troy. They will return Helen to you and take Paris to task," said Ulysses.

"My friend, you alone can persuade them to do so. Won't you accompany me to Troy?" asked



Menelaus.

"I will," consented Ulysses.

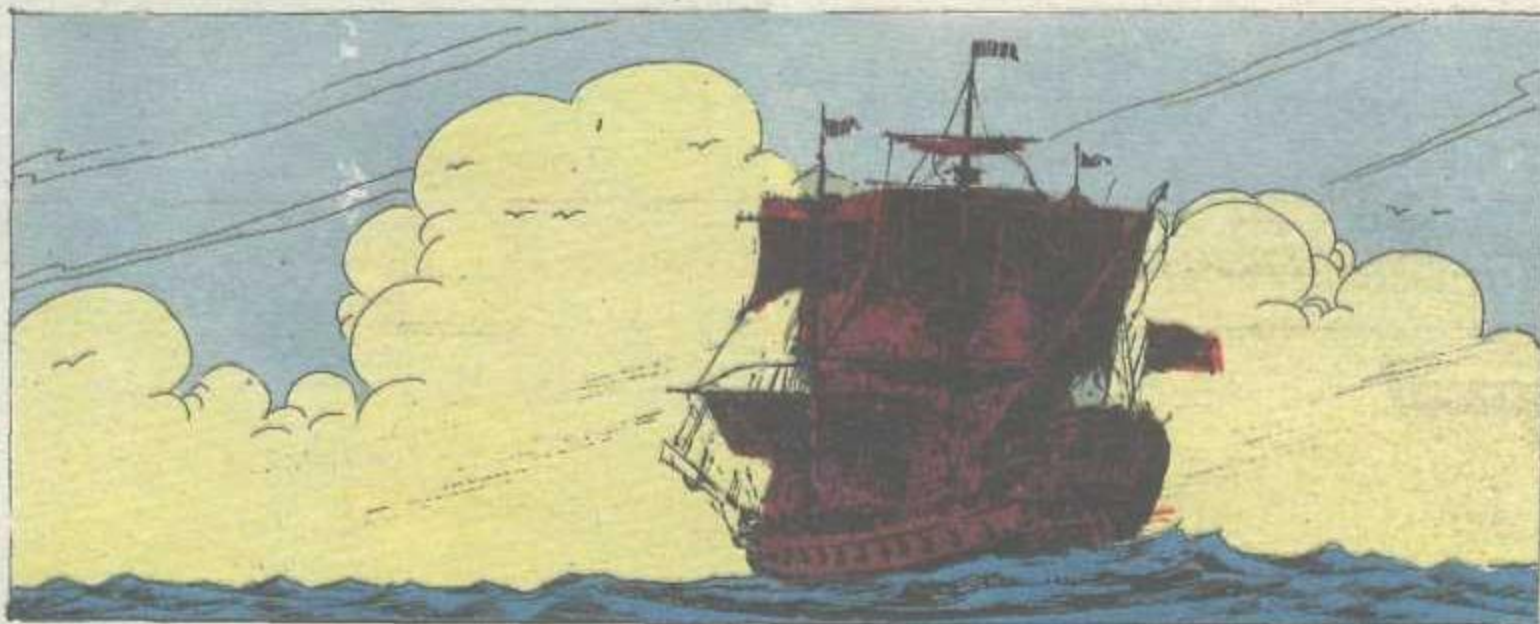
The two friends proceeded to Troy with great expectations. They did not take any army with them, for they were going to negotiate with them, not to fight.

But at Troy they were laughed at. "Get lost, you beggars!" someone commented. The Trojans had grown very proud of their power.

It was night. A humiliated Menelaus and an angry Ulysses were discussing in their camp what they should do. They were lucky that they had remained awake, for some Trojans tried to kill them, throwing fire-







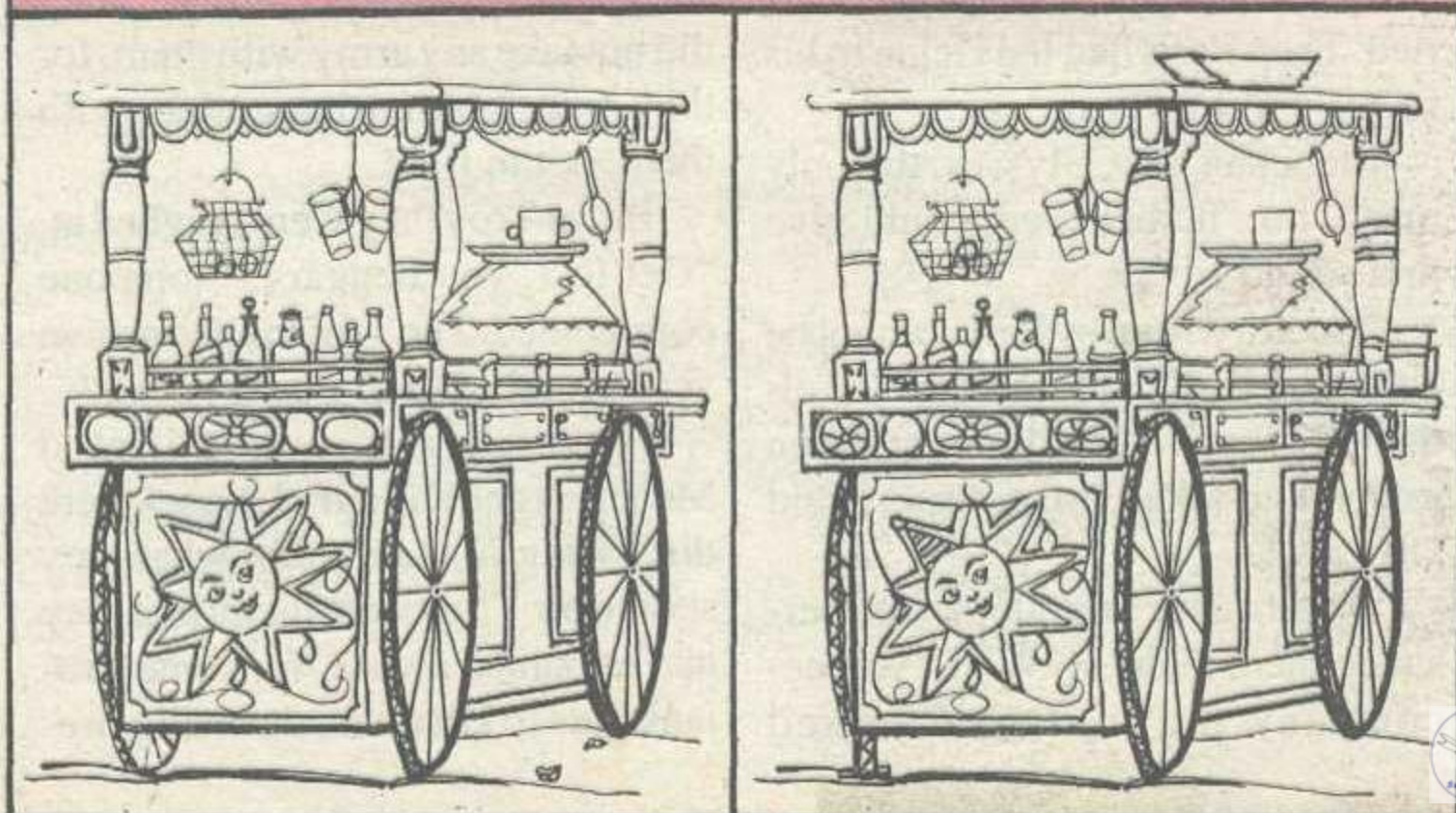
balls into their room and ready to stab them when they came out.

But swiftly the two friends dashed out of the room before the enemy could be conscious of it. They ran like arrows through the darkness and boarded their ship.

The ship at once began sailing for Sparta. Breathing heavily, the two friends swore vengeance. "Troy shall be destroyed to its last brick!" they said, looking at the faint lights seen over the grand fort of Troy.

—To continue

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES







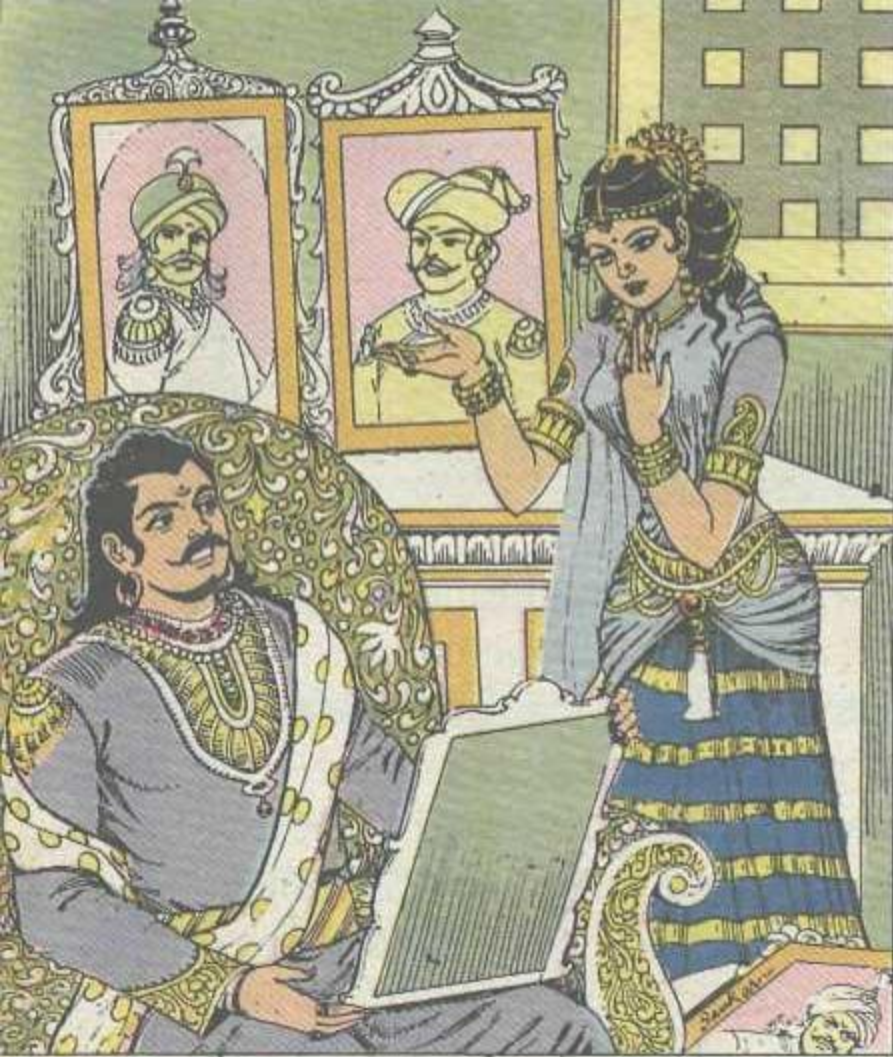
New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

## TWO QUESTIONS

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. Are you trying to please someone or satisfy yourself? Even if you want to help someone else, do you think the world will appreciate it and compliment you? And if you are doing something for your own good, then you need not bother about





fairness, justice, or righteousness. This is amply evident in the story of Kamini. Let me narrate her experience. Listen." And then the vampire began his narration.

The King of Kanakapuri, Kanakvarma, had only a daughter. As he had no son, he brought up Kamini in a way he thought she would become strong and brave like a youth. Her bravery and intelligence was the talk of the day, and the rulers and princes of the neighbouring countries wished to marry her. Kanakvarma showed their portraits to Kamini to ascertain her opinion.

"I am afraid, father, none of them

appears to me to be a suitable husband," remarked Princess Kamini. "I want my husband to be handsome, well-behaved, and daring."

Kanakvarma was surprised that his daughter had such definite ideas; so he did not attempt to persuade her or hurt her, and remained silent.

On the western border of Kanakapuri was a jungle where people believed lived a ghost, which used to scare the tribals near the jungle. When they ran helter-skelter from their houses, she would catch hold of them and make them her prey. As days went by, there were fewer and fewer tribals. They would be missing for days before their dead bodies were found. Their leaders, one day, decided to meet the king and plead for their safety. "O King! We're being harassed by a ghost in the jungle; her nuisance is increasing day by day, Sire! She descends on us all of a sudden and catches hold of our people who will be either missing, or get killed and eaten. Whenever she catches someone, she asks two questions, saying if he gives her the answers, she would release him. But neither do we understand the questions nor know their answers. She would then forcibly take away the man with her. Please help!"





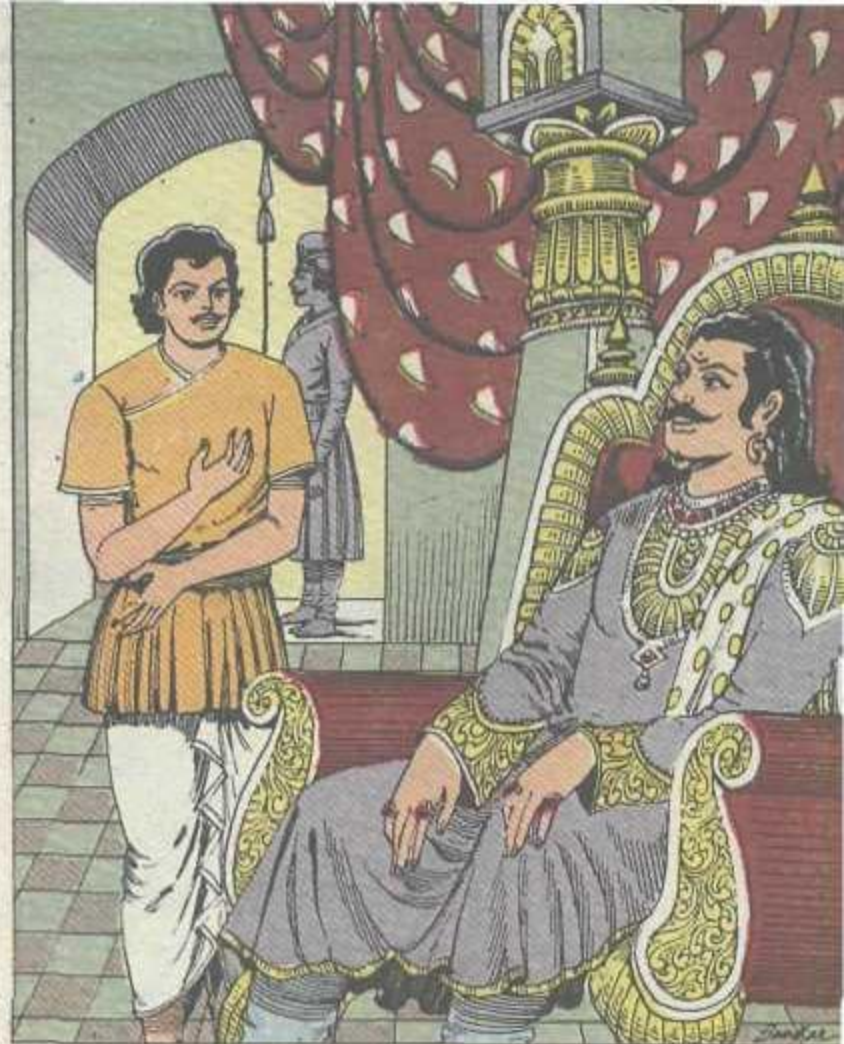
"Don't worry. I shall take immediate steps to destroy the ghost and save you from any more harassment," the king pacified the agitated tribals.

Kanakvarma then sent for his minister and discussed with him, and made the minister announce that whoever went into the jungle and answered the questions of the ghost and destroyed her would be given half of the kingdom. But nobody came forward for several days. Now, the king was very worried. After all, he had given a promise to the tribals; even otherwise it was only the duty of a king to protect his subjects.

One day, a young man called Kanakratna went to the palace wishing to meet the king. He offered his services to contain the ghost in the jungle. The king was happy. However, he was not sure whether the youth was capable of undertaking any hazardous job. So, he wanted to test him.

"You look like a villager, and not a warrior. Mind you, she is not any ordinary ghost. She asks questions and you've to give her satisfactory answers. Tell me, have you any brave act to your credit?" enquired Kanakvarma.

"O King! You're very correct. I'm



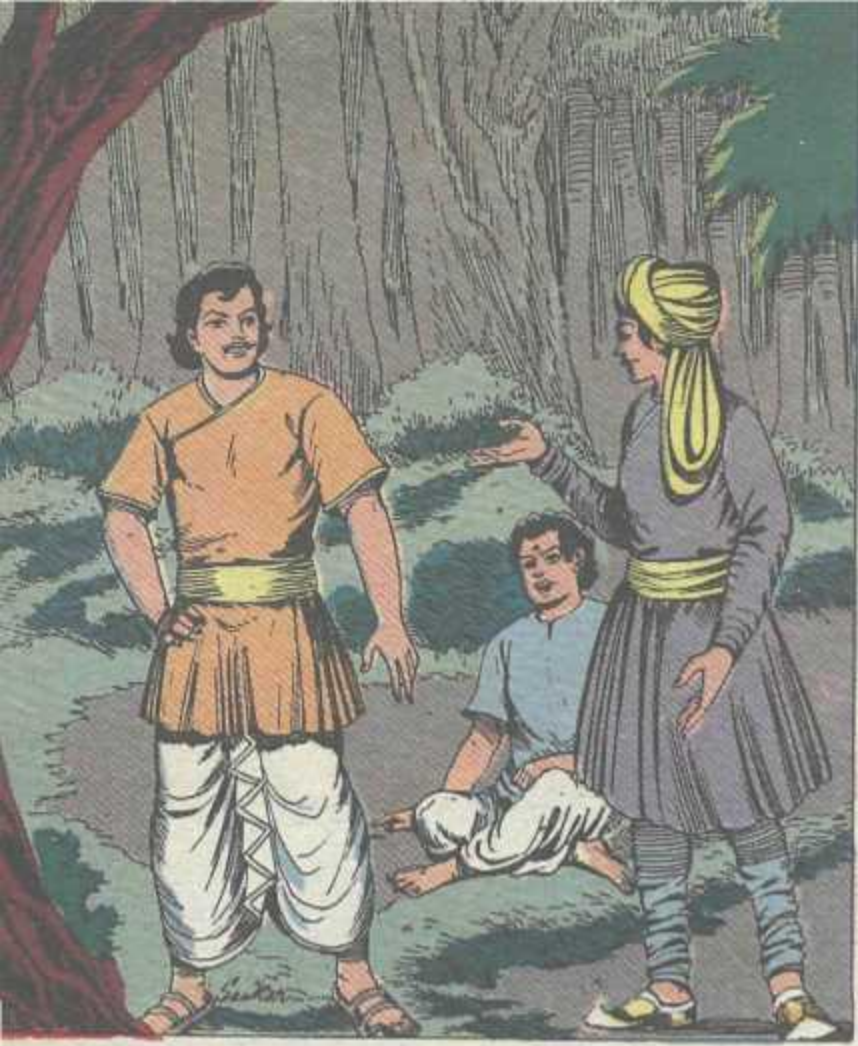
not a warrior. I'm only a peasant who works on his farm tirelessly," replied Kanakratna. "I've had no opportunity to test my strength. I happened to hear your offer and thought I should not miss a chance."

"So, you're ambitious! You hope to grab half of the kingdom by doing away with the ghost, do you?" remarked the king with a sneer. "I'm afraid your venture will only end up in your death at the hands of the ghost!"

"Your Majesty, I did not come here with any ambition to possess the kingdom or any part of it," Kanakratna protested. "I'm aware of







the sufferings of the people living in our jungles and I very much wish to help them. Even if I succeed, you need not give me any reward. If by sacrificing my life, the tribals will benefit, I'm ready to do that. I forgot to tell you, Your Majesty, I shall not be going alone; I shall be accompanied by my friend, Gnanasekhar who, you know, is one of the wisest men in the kingdom."

King Kanakvarma was surprised to find how determined the young man was. Besides, he was very courteous, too. He realised that the youth was not like the others of his age. The king permitted him to go to

the jungle and wished him success.

Kanakratna came out of the palace and met Gnanasekhar who was waiting for him. He told him of his meeting with the king and they immediately started for the jungle.

The king had sent some soldiers to show them the way. They escorted them up to the jungle and went back. Strangely, after they left, Gnanasekhar took fright when he saw the tall trees, the eerie silence, and the darkness that was slowly engulfing the jungle.

"Kanak, I can't go any further. I shall wait for you till you come. You can meet the ghost and answer her questions." He moved over to the shade of a tree and sat there.

Just then, from nowhere, a youth appeared and introduced himself as Somasekhar. "I was told that you intend tackling the ghost in the jungle and save the tribals. I wish you all success. I shall keep company with your friend here."

"He's Gnanasekhar, a great scholar," said Kanakratna. "He has promised to help me with the answers to the ghost's questions." He then walked into the jungle. He went some distance, very alert. Suddenly, he began to hear shrieks and shouts. He turned round and saw a devilish





looking figure. She caught hold of him in her palm where the youth looked a puny figure.

"Everybody will be afraid even to look at me," said the huge, uncouth woman," but you seem to be different from others. You appear to be quite daring. Are you so brave as to face me alone? Or are you a fool like the others who had become my prey?"

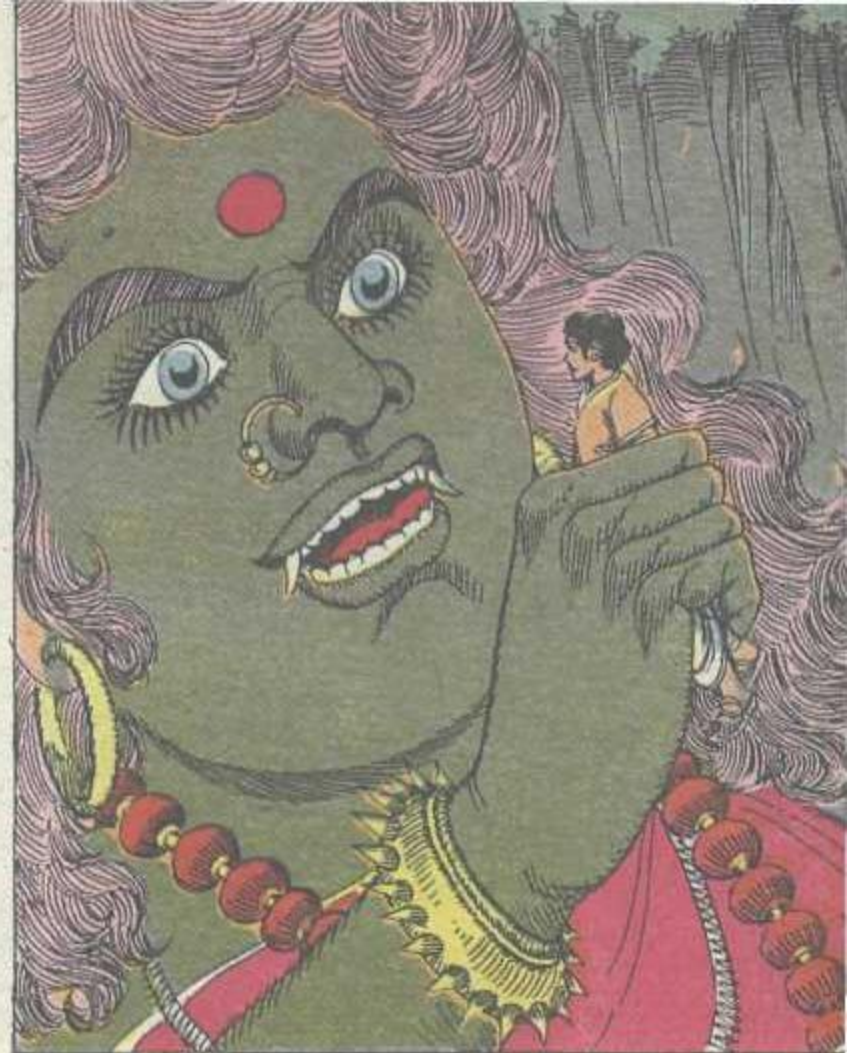
"I may be anybody; why're you bothered?" asked Kanakratna courageously. "You're the one who is scaring everybody. I heard you've a habit of asking questions. Go on, let me hear them. I shall try to answer you."

"All right. Listen," said the woman. "Who's the god or goddess most favourite to the people?"

"What's your next question?" queried Kanakratna. "Let me hear that also and then I shall give the answers for both."

"Who regrets his action after punishing someone for his crime?" said the woman staring at the youth in her palm.

Kanakratna fell silent for a while. He was not sure whether he knew the correct answer. "Before I give you the answers, please allow me to go and meet my two friends waiting



outside," said the young man. "I shall see them once more, because if I fail to answer you, I'm sure to become your victim. I shall come back soon and give you the answers. Won't you agree?"

"You seem to be dependable," said the ghost. "You're really different from all those I've seen till now. You're clever and brave. I'm granting your request, but you must come back soon." She then freed Kanakratna, who ran to where his friend was waiting for him.

Gnanasekhar gave him the answers. "The most favourite goddess is one's own mother; and it's a kind-







hearted ruler who regrets the punishment he gives."

"The answer to the first question is correct," remarked Somasekhar. "But the second answer is mother, once again. The mother will punish her child when she knows that he had done something wrong; but later, she'll also regret her action."

Kanakratna felt that Somasekhar was right. He ran back into the jungle where the ghost was anxiously waiting for him. She was glad when she saw him approaching. "I'm happy that you've kept your word. Now, give me the answers."

"The answer is the same for both

questions," said Kanakratna. "It is mother!"

Wonder of wonders! The ghost suddenly turned into a divine woman. There was a brilliant aura around her.

"Are you surprised, Kanakratna?" she asked him, as he opened his eyes wide in disbelief. "I'm a *yakshi*. Muktamala is my name. I was under a curse by which I had turned into a ghost. A hundred years ago, there used to be a *muni* staying here. Yogeswar had lost his wife and he brought up his daughter, showering on her all his affection. I happened to see him one day and I was very much attracted by his handsomeness. I requested him to marry me, but he did not agree to my wish. I thought the reason for his rejecting my request was his daughter. So, I assumed the form of a ghost and scared the girl. When she screamed, I caught hold of her, but she wriggled out of my hand.

"When the *muni* heard his daughter's cries, he rushed to the place. He saw me and cursed that I would continue in the form of a ghost. I fell at his feet and pleaded that I be freed from the curse. His heart melt. He told me, 'You don't know a woman's psychology, and you don't



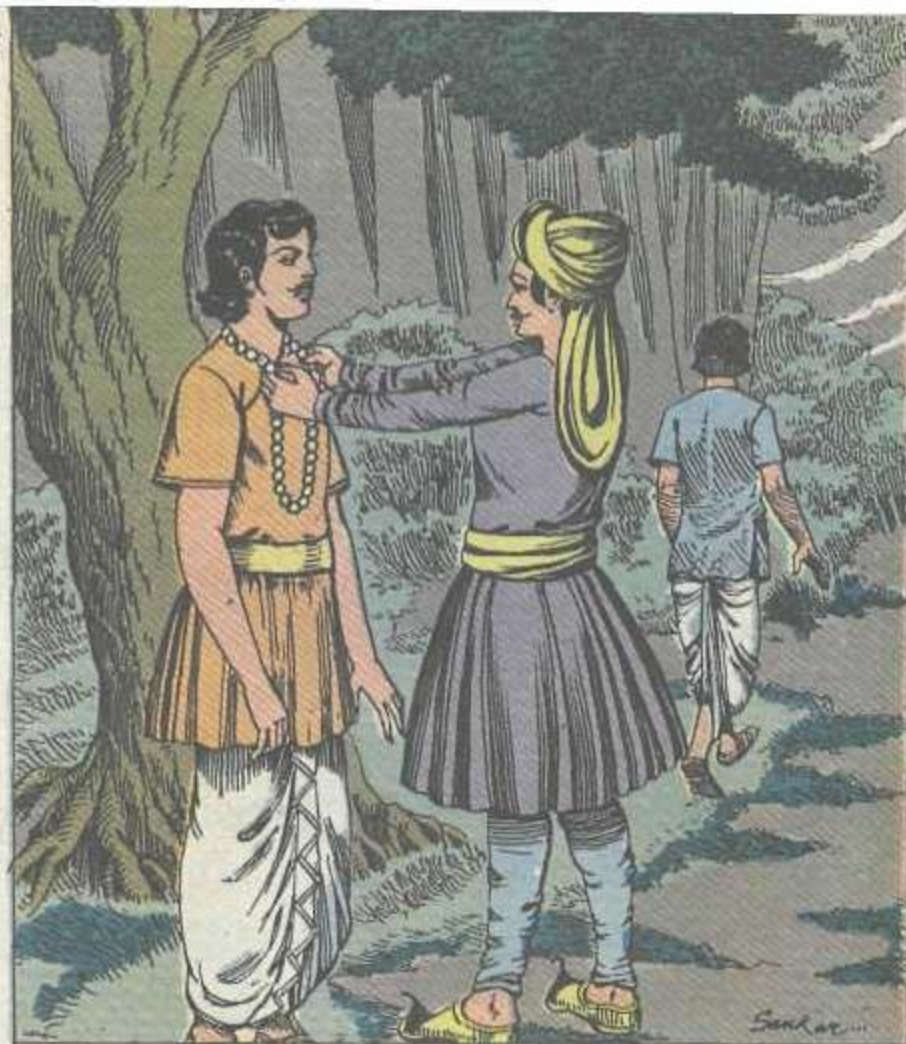


have a woman's heart. A mother will protect her child more than her own life. If the child does something wrong, she will punish him or her and then regret that she had to do so. That's why a mother is held in greater reverence than any god or goddess. You'll retain your ugly form for a hundred years. What I told you may be asked in the form of questions. If anyone gives you the correct answers, he'll be instrumental in your getting back your heavenly form,' he assured me. That's how you've given me back my form, Kanakratna."

"O divine Mother! The answer is not mine," said Kanakratna. "It was given to me by my friends Gnanasekhar and Somasekhar. I'm a simple, unlettered person."

"I know all that," observed the divine woman. She touched his head as if to bless him. "Kanakratna! You've at this moment acquired all the education that you need, and a lot of wisdom." She disappeared.

Kanakratna went back to his friends and told them all that had happened. Gnanasekhar was peeved. How could anyone become wiser than he? "What's this! How can an ordinary peasant like you become a wise man all of a sudden?" He walked away, full of jealousy.



The young man was stupefied. Gnanasekhar had been a good friend till then. Somasekhar consoled him. "He seems to have been bitten by jealousy. Don't take it to heart, Kanakratna." He then pulled out a garland from the folds of his dress and put it around his neck.

"I know why Gnanasekhar became angry with me, but this garland?" said Kanakratna, very much surprised. "I don't understand why you've honoured me like this!"

"I'm not really Somasekhar. I'm Kamini," said the princess coyly and walked away quickly.

Kanakratna made his way to the





palace and told King Kanakvarma how he had satisfied the ghost troubling the tribals. "Yes, my daughter has already told me all that she heard and knew. She has expressed her desire to marry you. I keep my promise. My daughter and my kingdom are yours."

The vampire concluded his story and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Why did Kamini reject the proposals from kings and princes and select someone who became wise only when he was blessed by a divine woman? The princess described Gnanasekhar as jealous and selfish but herself put the garland over Kanakratna. That only shows, she too was selfish, wasn't she? If you know the answers and still prefer to remain silent, O King! you're forewarned that your head will be blown to pieces!"

The king thought for a while and

said, "Princess Kamini wished to marry someone who was courteous and well-behaved. Kanakratna was somebody with those qualities. Otherwise, he would not have offered to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the tribals. Kamini realised this and was attracted to the youth. He was honest and sincere and kept his promise to the evil woman, though he was not aware at that moment that she was really a heavenly angel. This also attracted the princess to him, and she was not being selfish in her attitude to him. After all, she was not being a rival to another woman. She found a suitable person, though he was neither a prince nor the ruler of any country."

The vampire realised that the king had outsmarted him. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.





## Chandamama Supplement-73

### With fruits as dark as clouds

Near Tiruchirapalli, in Tamil Nadu, there is a temple dedicated to Lord Siva. What has made the Jambukeshwar temple unique is the huge jamun tree, the spreading branches of which have formed a canopy over it. The Hindus revere the jamun, as they believe that it is dear to Siva and his son, Ganesh, besides Lord Krishna. One legend says that the god of clouds (Megh) had transformed himself into a jamun tree, and hence the dark colour of its fruit. People compare the colour with that of Krishna, who is described as Megh-varna, of the colour of cloud. The Buddhists, too, consider the jamun as a sacred tree.

The English, who came upon the tree and its fruit in Java, in Indonesia, call it Java Plum. In Bengali it is *Kala jam*, in Marathi *Jambhul*, in Hindi *Jamun*, and in Tamil *Naval*. Its botanical name is *Syzygium Cumini* (Linn.), though it was originally listed as *Eugenia jambolana* Lamk. It is popularly known as the Indian blackberry.

The jamun is an evergreen tree that grows tall. The trunk is not straight but will be crooked at places and have several branches. In India, it is found everywhere. It grows wild and can also be cultivated. It needs dry weather at the time of flowering and fruit-bearing. The flowering time is normally between March and May. The flowers, a greenish white in colour, are small in size and are seen in clusters. The fruits ripen in the rainy season. They look shining and smooth; their juice is a purplish black. It has a cooling effect and is good for digestion. The fruit and its seed, besides the leaves and the bark have all medicinal properties. The wood is hard and durable, and is, therefore widely used for making boats.

## Common Trees of India





*Great Writers of  
India*



## VALMIKI : OUR FIRST POET

Thousands of years ago, our country abounded in forests. There were forests between villages, and forests around the towns. If one had to go from one place to another, often one had to pass through a forest.

We have so many burglars and bandits in towns and cities even today! No wonder there were some such people in the forests of olden days.

One day, a hermit was crossing a forest, chanting the name of Rama. In fact, that was the time when Lord Vishnu had been born as the Prince of Ayodhya, bearing the name Rama. While the common people looked upon the prince as an ideal young man, only few like this hermit knew that he was an incarnation of the Lord.

"Stop!" someone shouted. The hermit stopped and looked up. Facing him stood a stranger, looking like a ruffian, raising his axe as if ready to strike the hermit.

"Who are you?" asked the hermit.

"Can't you guess? I'm a bandit. Come on, hand over to me whatever valuables you have with you!" the bandit said haughtily.

"For how long have you been a bandit?" asked the hermit.

"For long, indeed, ever since I was married, and it became necessary for me to earn enough to maintain my wife and later my children!" answered the bandit.

"What a burden of sin you carry on your head!" commented the hermit.

"I carry no burden!" said the bandit, a bit annoyed.

"You do even though you don't feel or see it now. You have to suffer the consequences of your Karma!" the hermit said in a calm but steady voice.

His words had some effect on the bandit. He lowered his axe, and said, "Well, whatever I'm doing, I'm doing it for my family. My wife and children will share my Karma. My share of the burden will be light."

The hermit laughed and said, "None will share *your* Karma, my boy!"

The bandit rushed home and reported to his wife and children the dialogue he had had with the hermit. To his horror, they said, "The hermit is right. It's your duty to maintain us. How you do it, is your business."

The earth seemed to shake under the bandit's feet. He returned to the hermit and fell at his feet. "Please set me free from the terrible consequences of my evil deeds!"

The compassionate hermit assured him that if he chanted the name of Rama with devotion and concentration, his consciousness would change and he would



be free from his sins.

The bandit sat down under a tree and was lost in chanting the sacred name. Days passed, and then months and years. Once again, when the hermit was passing that way, he saw an ant-hill from which the chanting was heard. The hermit broke the ant-hill. Lo and behold! Inside it sat the man who was once a bandit—now turned into a sage.

As a bandit, he bore the name Ratnakara. As a sage, he bore the name of Valmiki, because he emerged from a "Valmika" which, in Sanskrit, means an ant-hill.

Ratnakara came of noble parentage, but he had fallen into the company of some bandits in his childhood and was following their practice. As Valmiki, he not only became a great Rishi or seer, but also the first poet of India.

It happened like this. One morning, he was returning to his hut after a bath in the river, Tamasa, when his eyes fell on two lovely birds playing with each other. The next moment he saw an arrow killing one of the birds. The other bird gave out heartrending cries.

Valmiki spotted the hunter who had shot the arrow. At once he uttered some words of protest. Uttered with great emotion, the words took a powerful rhythmic form. That was the beginning of poetry.

Who does not know about the great work of Valmiki, the *Ramayana*? That is an ageless epic. The story of Rama as told by this great poet continues to move us and enlighten us to this day.

The legend about Valmiki's early life may not be true. But it shows the capacity that remains hidden in man. A bandit, too, can become a great sage, if he developed in God and if he was determined to begin a new life.





# DO YOU KNOW?

1. Which country adopted the Metric system first?
2. Where in India will you go to see the "Valley of Gods"?
3. What was the name of the horse which was given to Alexander the Great when he was a boy?
4. Which is the "Pink City" of India? Why is it called so?
5. Who devised the self-defence method called Judo? When?
6. What is the name of the most famous Indian literary work on dance? Who is its author?
7. What is the name of the ancient Roman feast for slaves at which their masters waited upon them?
8. Which Indian mathematician invented zero?
9. Which country issues health stamps? What are their peculiarities?
10. How long does the earth take to complete one revolution around the sun?
11. What is the name of Japan's oldest book?
12. Which U.S. President was the first to visit India?
13. Which is the world's biggest library?
14. By what name was Tokyo known in olden times?
15. What was Galileo's first scientific discovery?
16. The flag of a country has its map on it. Which country?

## ANSWERS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. France.   | 8. Aryabhata.  |
| 2. Kulu, in Himachal Pradesh. Every village there has a deity. They are taken out in procession in decorated palanquins once a year during the Dasara celebration. | 7. Saturnalia.   |
| 3. Bucephalus  | 6. <i>Natyasastra</i> . It was written by Bharata muni.  |
| 4. Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. Most of the buildings and gateways are made of rose sandstone. The city was founded by Raja Jai Singh.                        | 5. Dr. Jigoro Kano, in 1882.   |
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| 8. Aryabhata.  | 1. France.   |
- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 9. New Zealand. Their selling price is more than the printed price. The extra amount collected is passed on to voluntary organisations who promote health service. | 16. Cyprus.                            |
| 10. 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes 46 seconds.  | 15. The pendulum.                      |
| 11. <i>Kojiki</i> . It describes Japan's ancient history upto A.D. 600.  | 14. Edo.                               |
| 12. Dwight Eisenhower - in 1956.   | 13. The Lenin State Library in Moscow. |
| 13. The Lenin State Library in Moscow.   |  |
| 14. Edo.   |  |
| 15. The pendulum.  |  |
| 16. Cyprus.  |  |





## ONE AND THE NINETY-NINE



**T**housands of years ago, a dreadful disease called plague struck the continent of Asia and wiped out town after town, city after city.

During that time, a righteous king ruled over the land of Bharat. He summoned the wisest in his realm and said, "O learned men, you know how this fatal epidemic is fast approaching our kingdom. Tell me, what should we do to save our people?"

The wise men conferred among themselves for a long time. The old-

est among them said, "Your Majesty, this disease is nothing else but the visit of the dark force, the Asura. To destroy is in his nature."

"But how can we drive away this evil power?" asked the king.

"O King! Offering prayers to Lord Siva and seeking His benevolence is the only solution," replied one of the wise lot.

So, the king ordered his people to invoke Lord Siva, and they all did so in temples and homes. The thoughtful ruler also paid for their





worship from the royal coffers.

Several months passed, and the terrible disease was now nearing the frontiers of the kingdom. One night, the mighty God appeared before the king. "Your people's devotion has pleased me. I will grant you a boon, but only one," He said.

The king was awe-struck. Prostrating before the God, he asked, "O Lord, please protect us from the fast approaching disease!"

"Do not panic. Your prayers were sincere and they have touched my heart. My disciple, Nandi, will guard your land from the evil," assured Lord Siva, and His heavenly figure

now slowly disappeared.

The following day, the people of the realm rejoiced at the happy news.

So, the great Nandi was posted to prevent the plague from entering the kingdom. He kept a strict vigil on the borders of the kingdom. But one stormy night, suddenly out of the wind and rain, Plague appeared in a form terrible and fierce and threatened to ravage the land.

"Be off, you evil force! One more step, and you will be finished," warned Nandi lifting up his trident.

But the grim figure was not the one to give in so easily. There followed a great duel between the two giants. Hours rolled into days and still they battled, uprooting entire forests and demolishing mountains.

At last fatigued, Plague gave in and agreed to make truce, but on a condition.

"Allow me to stay in the capital for one day only and take only one human being as my victim. Then I will depart, never to return again," said Plague assuringly.

"All right. But mind you, only one day and not more than one man," reminded Nandi.

But alas, the city plunged into gloom the very next day. For, it was found that not one but a hundred





people had died. The sad king, with tears in his eyes, went to report to Nandi. Lord Siva's servant seethed in anger and rushed to find Plague. He met him, relaxing in a dark dingy corner of a cave in the mountains.

"You ungrateful wretch, how dare you break your promise? Not one but a hundred men have fallen victims to you. Now you are going to pay for it and perish under my grip," thundered Nandi, taking his opponent by the neck.

But Plague only laughed and said, "Friend, I have not broken my promise. Only one victim have I taken according to the word given to

you."

"Then how did the other ninety-nine perish?" asked Nandi quite intrigued.

"Well, the others died of fear. They had only simple fever! Unfortunately, they mistook it as a sign of my approach and died out of fright," answered Plague, in an amused tone.

The great Nandi set the grim form free and as he returned to his Master in the snowy abodes, he pondered, 'Alas, if only man could keep his mind steady and his faith firm in God's Grace!'

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das

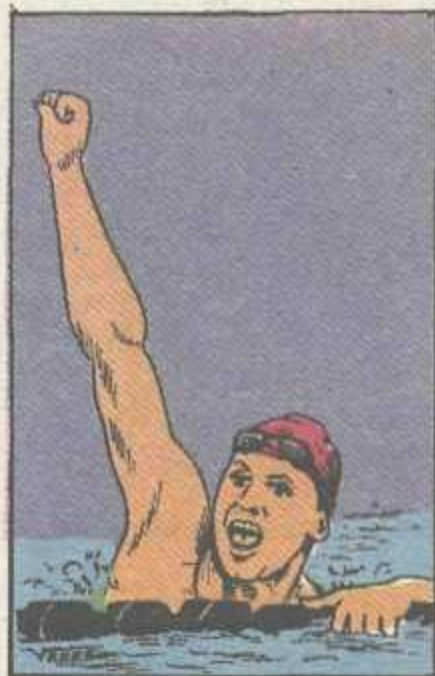




# SPORTS SNIPPETS

## Swim records tumble

September saw many swimming records getting "drowned"! Sievinen, of Finland clocked 1 min. 58.16 seconds in the 200 metre individual medley event,



erasing the 3-year-old mark of 1:59.36 standing in the name of Tamas Darni. He was the first Finn to make a world record.

On the same day, China's Le Jingyi broke the 50m freestyle

record. Her time was 24.51 seconds, which was 0.28 sec. better than the record created by her compatriot Wenyi Wang at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. Le's was the 10th world record to be shattered since the Championships began. The Finn's record – the ninth – came minutes earlier.

On Sept. 10, Chinese women set two world records in one race. They clocked 4:1.67. sec. to claim the 400m medley relay, slicing 0.87 sec. off the mark set by the U.S. team at the 1992 Olympics. In the same race, He Cihong set a new mark for the backstroke part of the event. Her timing was 1:00.16, which was better by 0.15 sec. standing in the name of Kristina Egerszegi of Hungary, in 1991 in Athens.

Russia's Alex Popov, the same day,

became the first swimmer to win the 50m and 100m freestyle titles at a single World Championships. He won the 50m in 22.17 sec.–the fastest of the



year. The fall and half distances are part of the same race.

A day earlier, Kieren Perkins and Samantha Riley, both of Australia, broke two records. Perkins snipped 1.20 seconds off his own mark set up at the Commonwealth Games (see *Chandamama*, October 1994) in 400m freestyle, which is part of the 800m event (see *Chandamama*, October 1994). He clocked 3:48.30 seconds. Holder of both the 800 metres and 1,500 metres world records, Perkins was however slow in the longer distance even in heats.

Samantha Riley clocked 1:07.69 seconds in the women's 100m breakstroke final, breaking the seven-year-old record to the credit of Silke Hoerner. Earlier, she had won the gold in the 200m breaststroke.

## Channel record

On September 27, Chad Hundebly of the U.S.A. broke the English Channel swimming record, Clipping 23 min-





utes off the 16-year-old mark (7 hrs, 40 min.) set by a woman—Penny Lee Dean in 1978. Chad's timing was 7 hrs. 17 minutes. The straight line distance is 32 km, but the shifting tide is said to have made Chad swim several kilometres more. The Channel Swimming Association, which has been monitoring the timings since 1875, says some 6,400 attempts have so far been made to cross the Channel.

## Struck by Retirement bug

Well-known sportsmen have either retired or have expressed a desire to retire. Motor racing will miss Alain Prost of France (38 years) when he retires at the end of the year. When he announced his decision on September 23, there were two more events awaiting his participation—the Portuguese Grand Prix and the Australian Grand Prix. He already has three world titles in his pocket—which he captured in 1985, 1986, and 1989. He has a record 51 victories in Formula one racing over a span of 13 years. He broke Jackie Stewart's Career record in 1987, when he won his 28th victory. Incidentally, Juan Manuel Fangio of Argentina has won five world titles between 1951 and 1957.

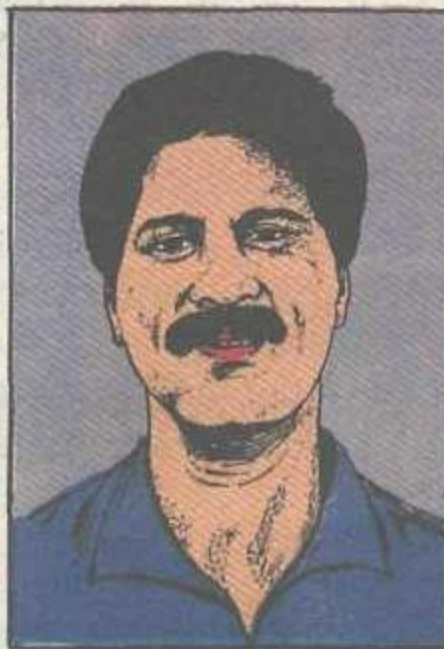
The BIG name in Basketball, Michael Jordan, retired on October 6, leaving the National Basketball Asso-



ciation of the U.S.A. denuded of its greatest player. For the last seven years, he had been the scoring champion of NBA. He had led his team, Chicago Bulls, to vic-

tory three times. He cited the murder of his father in summer as one of the reasons for his decision. "The thrill is gone: there's nothing left for me to do," he is said to have told the Press.

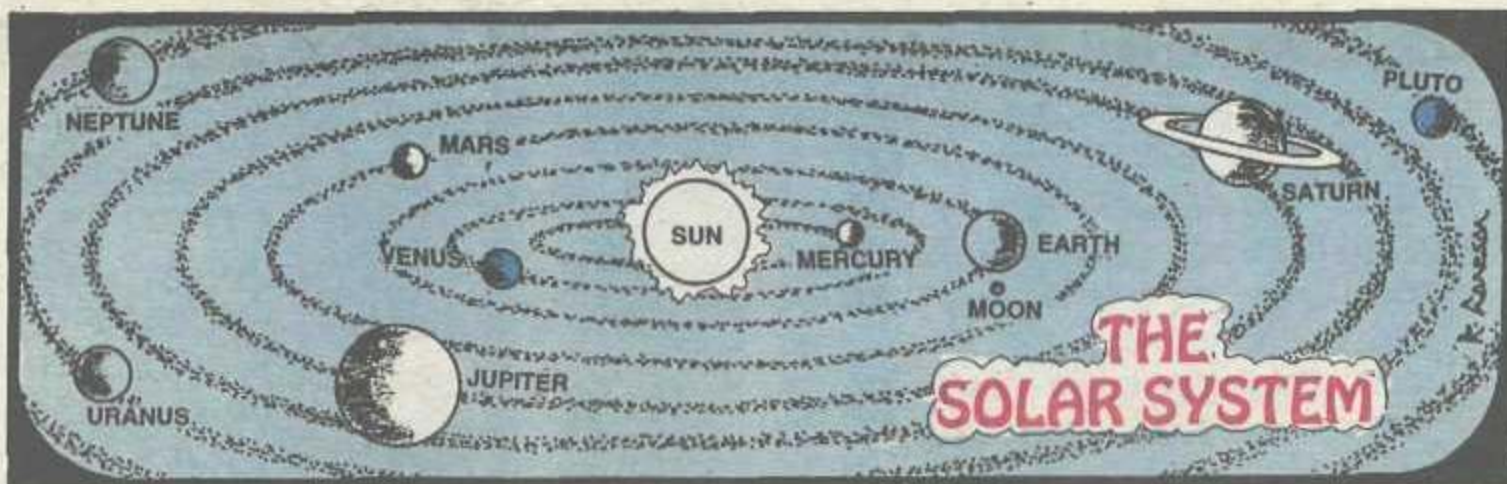
India's Test opener and a former captain, Krishnamachari Srikkanth, announced his retirement from first class cricket on October 8. He played in international cricket for ten years and scored



more than 2,000 runs in Test matches. In limited-overs cricket, he was India's highest run getter and fastest, too. He had four centuries and several 90s to his credit in an aggregate of

4,100 runs. In a message he said, "I am deeply indebted to the public who always reposed so much faith in me. I hope I lived up to their expectations most of the time."





## OUR DEAR UNCLE MOON

Moon is popular to us as **Chandamama**, or Uncle Moon. Like an uncle who is close to us, the Moon too is our Earth's nearest relative in the Solar System. One of our ancient scriptures describes the Moon as **Prithvi Putra**, son of the Earth. In fact, he is so much intimate with us that we do not count him among the respectable and formidable members of the Solar System.

But that is a sentimental way of looking at the situation. Scientifically speaking, the Solar System counts only those planets as its members who circle the Sun. Our Moon is most attached to the Earth. He circles the Earth. And if he circles the Sun, too, it is because the Earth circles the Sun.

Many scientists believe that he is truly the son of our Earth. That is to say, once upon a time, ages ago, he sprang out of the Earth, like the Prodigal Son. However, the tie with the Earth was so strong that he stopped at a distance of 384,000 km. That is a distance only ten times more than the distance one covers by travelling along the Earth's equator.

The Moon's diameter is 3,475 km.

It goes on rotating while revolving around the Earth. It takes 27 days 7 hours 43 minutes to make a full circle around the Earth.

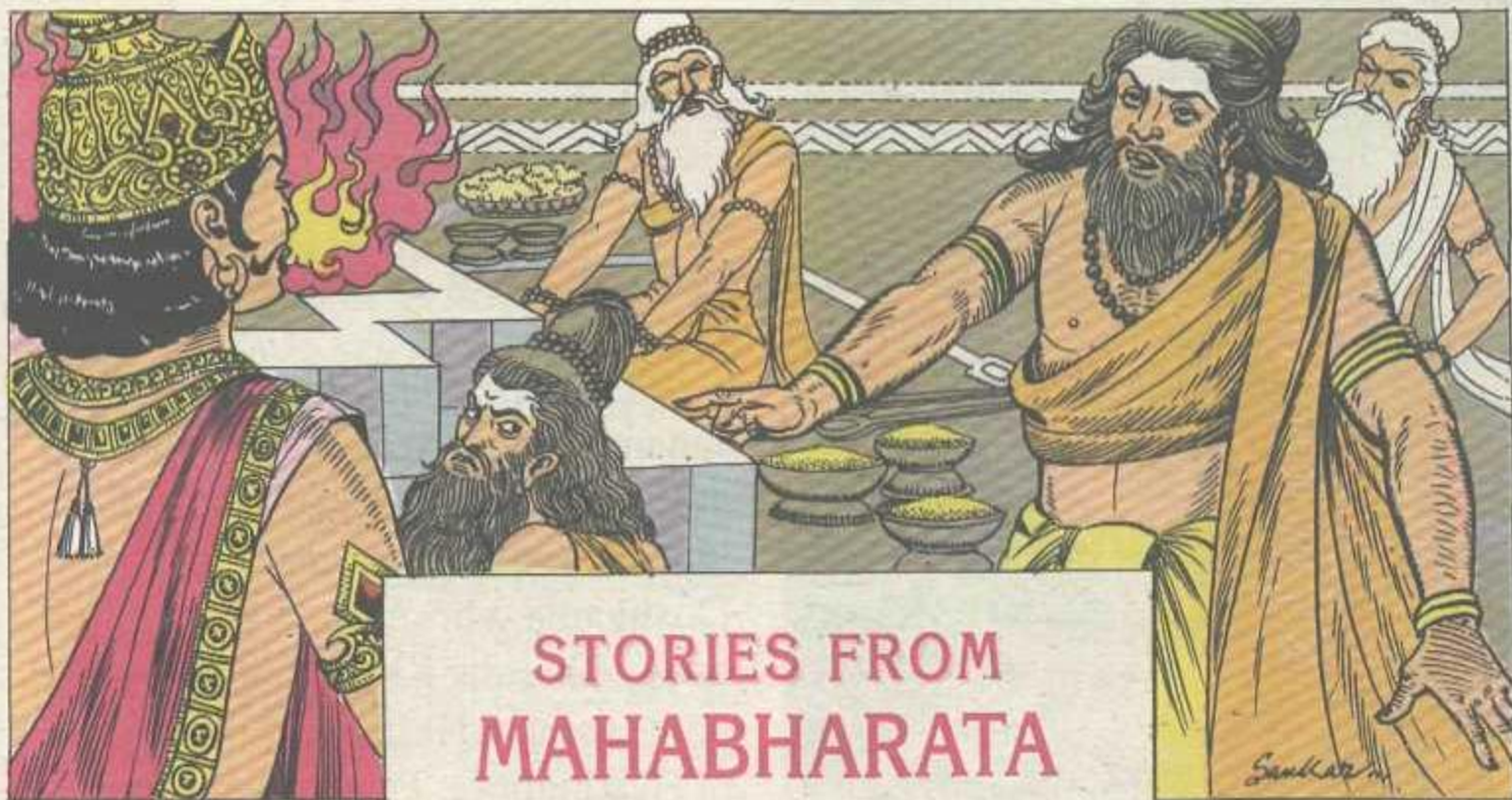
It was in 1959 that man began physically exploring the Moon—with the Russian Luna 2 crashlanding on it. But a truly great achievement was made when, in 1969, man walked on the Moon, reaching there by the spacecraft famous as Apollo.

The uneven surface of the Moon are marked by craters and mountains. The craters might have been created by both assault by meteors and volcanic eruptions.

But bathed in the soothing moonlight, how can we think that the Moon was not as soft and tender as a basketful of jasmine flowers?







## STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

### The story so far :-

*Lord Ganapati wrote down the Mahabharata, as sage Veda Vyasa composed and dictated it. We read how King Janamejay, the son of King Parikshit, heard the story of his father's death by the bite of serpent Takshaka, and how sage Utanka exhorted the king to punish Takshaka.)*

**P**ersuaded by sage Utanka, King Janamejay decided to perform the *Sarpayajna* or the sacrifice of the serpents in order to avenge his father's death. Elaborate preparations were made, and sages learned in the lore of sacrifices were invited from far and near. However, one of the sages prophesied that the sacrifice would never be completed.

As the sacrifice was in progress, thousands of serpents were drawn

from all directions and dropped into the sacrificial fire and were consumed.

Serpent Takshaka sought the protection of Indra, King of the gods, whilst another serpent-chief, Vasuki, sought the help of his nephew, Astika.

Astika went to the sacrifice, and because of his learning and charm was well received by the king and all the sages present. In fact, the hymns

## 2. DESTRUCTION OF SERPENTS







he chanted were so moving that the king asked him to choose a suitable reward.

Astika in a pleading voice said, "O great King, in order to avenge your father's death, you have already killed thousands of snakes. I beg of you to spare those that are left."

The king did not wish to stop the sacrifice and asked Astika to ask for some other reward, but again Astika appealed to the king to have mercy. At this, the sages also told the king that Astika's request was not unreasonable, and so the king ordered that the sacrifice be stopped.

\*\*\*\*

At this moment Veda Vyas arrived with his disciples, and narrated to the assembly the history of the forefathers of Janamejay and the Pandavas.

The earliest recorded ancestor of Janamejay was Saraswata Manu, and amongst the long line of descendants were Yayati, Pururava, and then Dushyanta whose son was the illustrious Bharata. King Bharata's great grandson was Hasti who built the city of Hastinapura. Then, seven generations later, Santanu came to the throne.

### **The Story of King Santanu**

One day the king was out hunting and on the bank of the river Ganga, he saw a maiden of breathtaking loveliness. He was enchanted by her beauty and he earnestly offered her his kingdom, his wealth, even his very life, if she would become his wife.

The maiden smiled at the king and said, "I shall become your wife, but on certain conditions. You must never ask me who I am, nor ever object to anything I do. You must not say anything displeasing to me. I shall leave you at once if you violate any of these conditions."

The infatuated king gave his assent and she became his wife.





King Santanu and his queen lived a life of perfect happiness, forgetful of the passage of time. Yet each time she gave birth to a child, she would take the newborn to the Ganga and cast it into the river, and return to the king with a smiling face.

The king was filled with horror at such murderous deeds, but suffered it all in agonising silence, ever aware of the promise he had made. He often wondered as to who she was, and why she should be so cruel to her own babes.

In all she immersed seven children in the river. When the eighth child was born, and she was about to throw it into the river, King Santanu could bear the torment no longer. He rushed forward, and catching her by the arm, shouted, "Stop, you cruel woman! How can you so fiendishly murder your own innocent children?"

"My King," she replied, "you have forgotten your promise. Now you may have your child, for you do not need me anymore. I am the goddess Ganga. I came to earth at the request of these eight souls who were born as your sons. They are godly beings, who were cursed to be born as men. They begged me to marry you and mother them. It was also



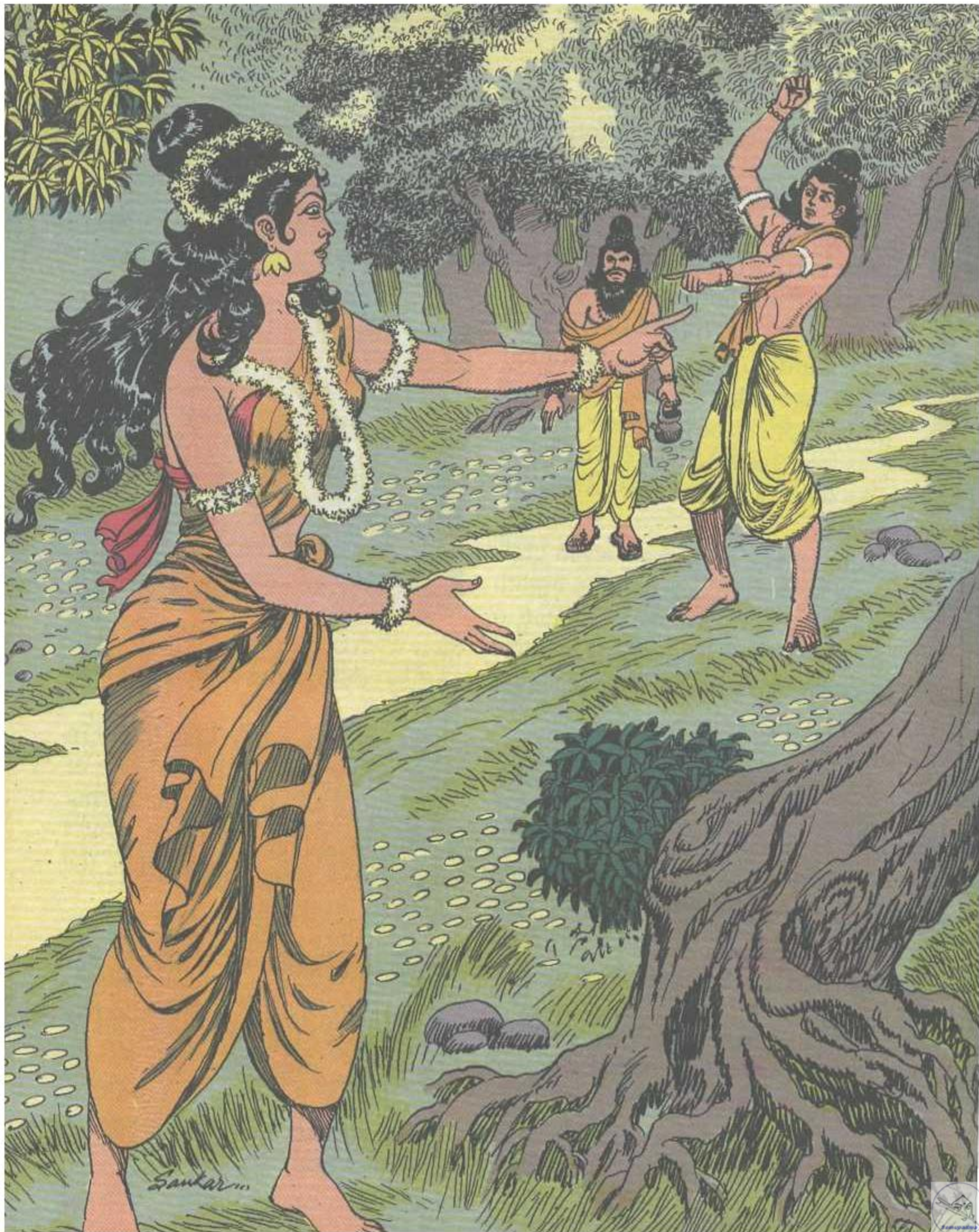
their wish that I should drown them so they could return to their abode in heaven."

She placed her last babe in Santanu's arms. "Take good care of him, for he will live long and bring great glory to the Kuru race. Now I must leave you." Saying this, the goddess disappeared.

Santanu's grief knew no bounds. He loved Ganga very deeply, and now his only joy was his little son. On him the king lavished all his affections, and the child, named Devavrata, grew up to be a truly noble prince, and was made the crown-prince.









Many years went by. One day, as the king was riding by the river Yamuna, the air was filled with a fragrance so divinely sweet that the king was eager to find its source. He traced it to a girl sitting on the bank of the river. Santanu was so overcome by her beauty that he begged her to marry him.

"I am Satyawati," said the girl. "My father is the chief of the fisherfolk. You must seek his consent."

King Santanu wasted no time in going to see her father, and earnestly begged for the hand of Satyawati in marriage.

"I will consent to this marriage," said the father, "provided you promise that if my daughter has a son, he shall be the king after you."

The king could not make such a promise, as it meant setting aside the rights of Devavrata, his son by goddess Ganga. He therefore returned to his palace, sick with frustration. He did not tell anyone of his sorrows. As the days passed, he could neither eat nor sleep.

Prince Devavrata worried over his father's plight. Questioning the king's charioteer, he soon discovered the reason for his father's anguish.

He went to the chief of the fisherfolk and besought his daughter's



hand for his father, readily promising that a son by the marriage would succeed his father as the king.

The chief of the fisherfolk was greatly moved. "You are a great and noble prince, and I have no doubt you will keep your word, but how can I know that children born of you would not seek to seize the kingship which was your birthright?"

Although startled by this demand, Devavrata was still determined to fulfil the king's desire. So he declared with upraised arms, "I shall never marry. I dedicate myself to a life of celibacy."

As he uttered these words, the







gods showered flowers on his head, and the air resounded with cries of "Bhishma!" "Bhishma!" From then onwards, the Prince was known as Bhishma, the one who takes a solemn vow and fulfils it.

So King Santanu married Satyawati. Two sons were born to them: Chitrangada and Vichitravirya. Eventually Chitrangada came to the throne, but was killed in a battle, and died without any children. He was succeeded by Vichitravirya, who had two sons named Dhritarashtra, who was born blind, and Pandu. When they came of age, Dhritarashtra married the Gandhara princess,

Gandhari, and Pandu married princess Kunti. As Dhritarashtra was blind, Pandu ascended the throne on the death of Vichitravirya.

### **The Story of Kunti Devi and Pandu**

When Princess Kunti was a young girl, the sage Durvasa stayed for a time as a guest in her father's home. The sage was so pleased with the care and attention Kunti bestowed on him that he made the princess a promise saying, "Child, if you call upon any of the gods repeating the hymn I shall teach you, the god will bless you with a son equal to him in glory."

Out of childish curiosity, Kunti recited this divine hymn to the Sun god. A child with a suit of gold armour and diamond ear-rings was born to her. Kunti was aghast. She wondered what she should do with the child. One night she put the child in a casket and set it afloat in the river Ganga. A groom of Dhritarashtra's happened to see the casket in the river. He was both surprised and delighted to find that it contained a beautiful child. He handed it over to his wife, and it was this child who came to be known as Karna.

On the advice of Bhishma, and in accordance with the custom of that







time, Pandu took a second wife, Madri, the sister of the King of Madra.

One day, King Pandu was out hunting, and seeing a pair of deer, shot the male deer ignorant of the fact that it was a sage in the guise of a deer. With his dying breath, the sage put a curse on Pandu that he would never be able to have any children.

Pandu was heartbroken at this curse, and retreated into the forest to live in solitude with his two queens, and it looked as if Pandu would die childless. Then Kunti told Pandu about sage Durvasa's promise that she could have children after invoking the gods.

Pandu, although still in the throes of despair, readily agreed to Kunti

having three sons by the blessings of three gods. Later Kunti prayed to the gods on behalf of Madri, and she in her turn was gifted with two sons.

But Pandu still could not find any happiness in life. He was continuously haunted by the sage's curse. Then, one day, Pandu suddenly collapsed and died.

Madri could not contain her sorrow, and she burnt herself on the pyre of her husband, entreating Kunti to remain and be a mother to her children.

The sages of the forest took the bereaved Kunti and the five children to Hastinapura, where they were brought up by their uncle Dhritarashtra along with his own one hundred sons.

— To continue

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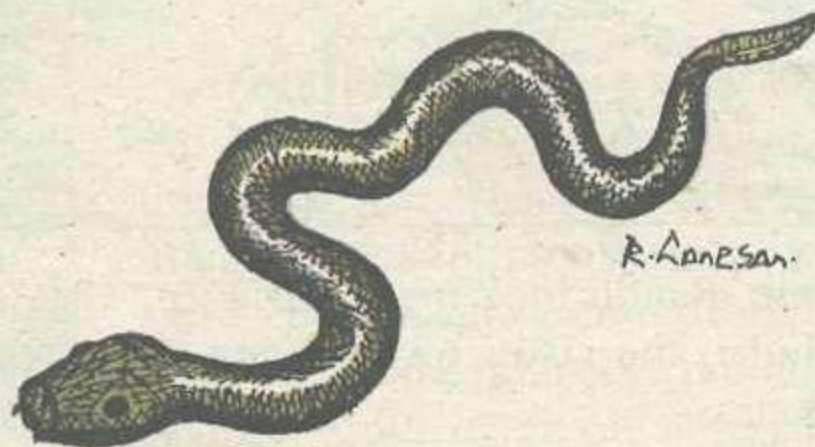




# World of Nature

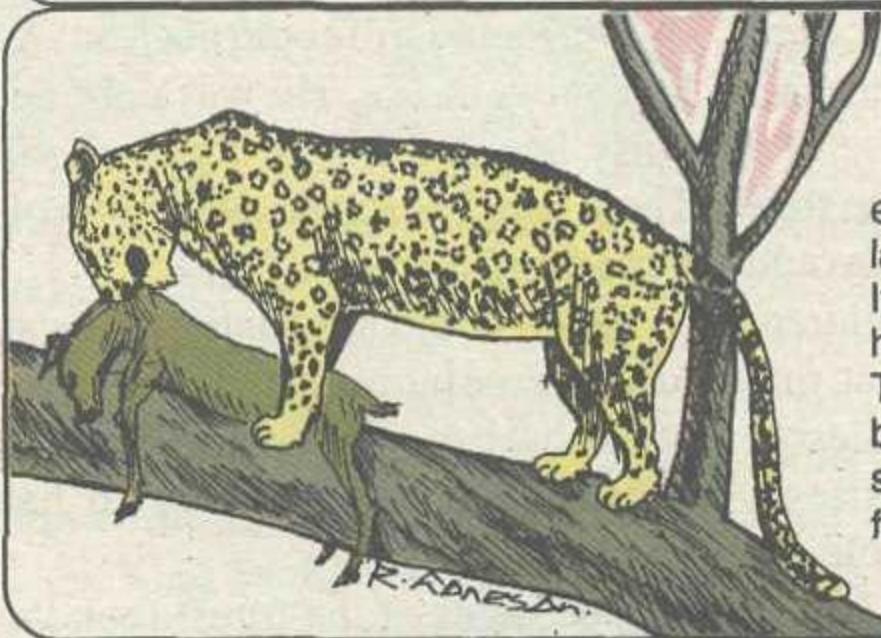
## Sensory device

The rattlesnake, which hunts mostly at night, uses a unique sensory device to move about. There is a pit formation between the nose and the eye which can detect heat. It enables the snake to find sources of heat with some precision. This also helps them detect its prey.



## Largest cat

The jaguar found in the forests of South America is the largest of America's wild cats. It weighs nearly 300 lb, and is heavier than a normal leopard. The jaguar's yellow coat has black spots looking like rosettes in a formation of four or five around a central spot.



## First insect to fly

The dragonflies are commonly believed to have appeared on the earth some 300,000,000 years ago. They are supposed to be the first insects capable of flying. Some flies have a wingspan as long as 70 cm.





## A Journey with a Difference

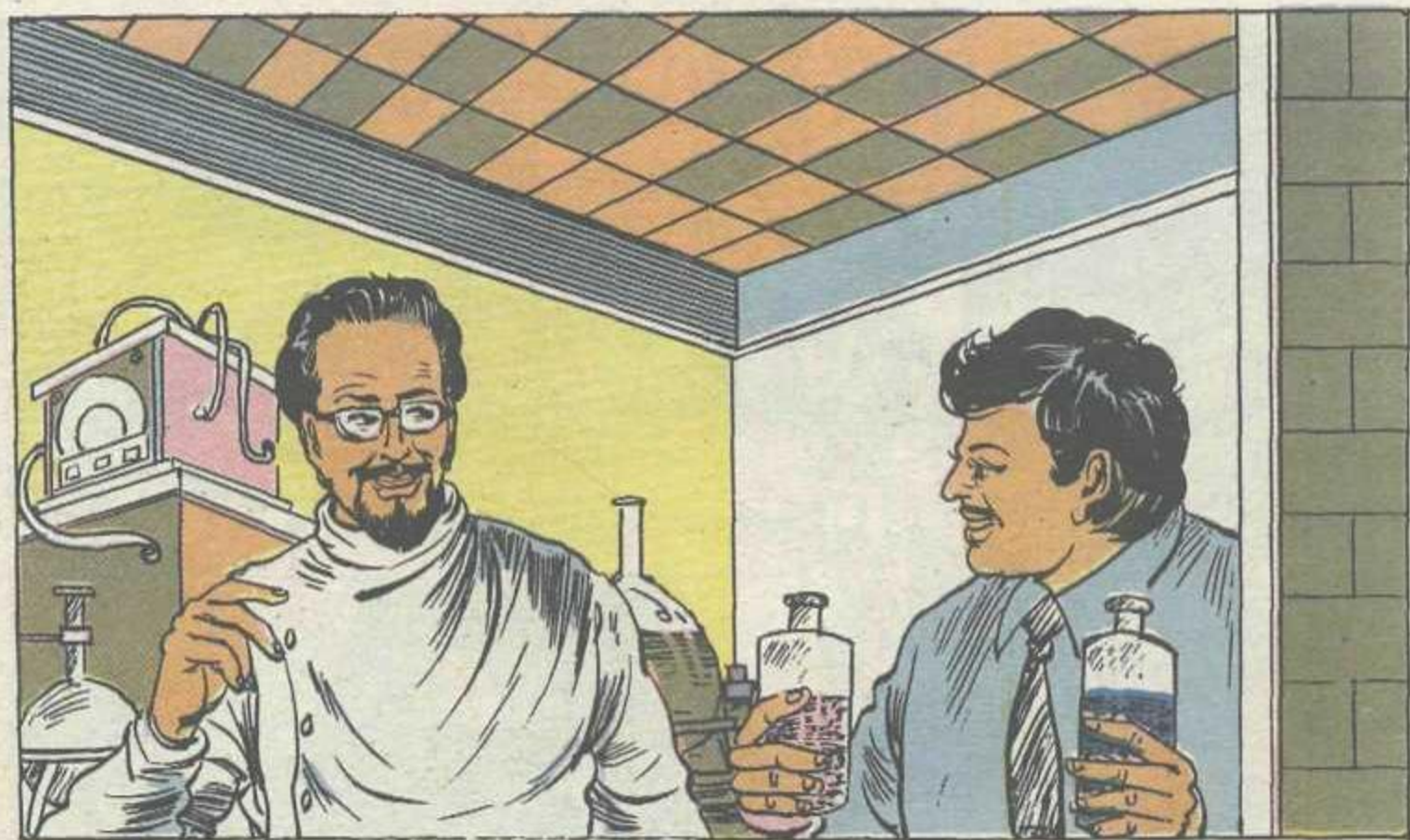
**I**t happened about three years ago but the event is still vivid in my memory. It was an amazing experience and I shared it with my old friend Mehrotra. The world knows Mehrotra as Dr. Mehrotra the scientist, but I know him only as "Merry", a jolly fellow and a fine friend.

I was relaxing at home after a tiring day, when the phone rang. I answered. It was Mehrotra on the line. "Listen," he said excitedly, "something's cooking out here! Drop in double quick."

I was used to these sudden invitations from Merry, and so I drove to his place.

Along with a tremendous knowledge of science, Merry also had an avid interest in History. On many occasions he had called me over to show me a special stamp or a coin or perhaps a video cassette on some recent historical find. I was expecting something of that kind. I was mistaken.

I found him excitedly pacing in his laboratory. On seeing me, his bright





eyes brightened further. He showed me two bottles. One contained a blue powder and the other something red. "A time machine! Yes!" he almost shouted.

"What!" I responded unbelievably.

"Yes," he explained, "you eat some of the blue powder to go back in time, and the red one to get back to the present."

"Today isn't the first of April, Merry?" I said.

He laughed. "I'm serious. Want to try?"

Both of us took a certain amount of blue powder and sat facing each other. Nothing was happening. After ten

minutes of tense waiting, I said, "Well, Merry?"

He smiled, "You've forgotten your Biology, pal. It takes time for something to get digest.....". His words were cut off by a drumming sound that filled my ears. His figure became blurred and faded away. I had a strange sensation and felt nauseated. Then I think I lost consciousness.

When I came to, Merry and I were sitting behind a huge pillar. Rich carpets decorated the floor of the huge hall in which we were sitting. From behind the pillar, I saw about twenty men sitting in the hall before a richly decorated throne, on which sat a man wearing flowing robes, a turban, and





smelling a rose. I looked at Merry for an explanation. Before he could utter a word, the man on the throne said something to the assembled audience. I could not understand his tongue, but I picked out one qualifying phrase. He had mentioned the word "Tansen". Tansen..... of course! Akbar's court musician. So, we were in Emperor Akbar's court. And Akbar was asking Tansen to sing! I looked at Merry. His keen scientific brain had figured out all this much before me, and he was ready with his small tape-recorder. Then Tansen burst into some soul-stirring music. We were spellbound. After the song was over, the courtiers clapped enthusiastically. Then I

committed a mistake. I joined in the clapping. The song had so impressed me that I forgot the place, the time, and everything else.

Immediately, all eyes were on us. Our twentieth century dress was so different from that of anyone in the Mughal *darbar*. The Emperor immediately mistook us for spies. Pointing his finger at us, he shouted at his guards. There was a series of clangs, as swords were drawn and about a dozen hefty soldiers rushed at us.

Merry grabbed my arm. "Run!" he yelled.

We dashed out of the darbar hall and entered a passage. The guards were gaining on us. We rushed from





passage to passage, passing many doorways and not knowing where we were heading. As we ran, more and more guards joined in the chase. The passages were dark and the only sources of light were burning torches hung from brackets on the walls.

Finally, Merry spotted a vacant room towards one side of the corridor. "Quick! In there!" We rushed in and bolted the door just as the guards reached it. While Merry fumbled with the bottle of red powder, blows rained down on the door from outside. "Merry! Be fast, pal. They'll be here any minute." I grabbed a sword from the wall and stood with my back to the wall. After what seemed a very long time, Merry said, "Here! The powders are in right quantity. Gulp it down!"

I did as I was told. Merry grabbed a spear from the wall and, with sweating brows, we looked at the door. The banging on the door was now re-

placed by the regular hacking sound of an axe.

"Good God!" I said. "They'll soon be using that axe on us."

"How good are you with a sword?" asked Merry in a shaking voice. Just then I felt the drumming in my ear. The powder had started its work. Both of us retreated to the far end of the room. There was an ear-splitting crash as the door yielded. About two dozen Mughal soldiers stormed into the room with swords in their hands. But they never reached us. Their figures got blurred before my eyes. When I came to, we were back in Merry's lab. He still carried the spear while I held the sword.

As I finish this story, my gaze falls upon the sword which is hung on the wall of my room. As for Merry, he still keeps the spear, and the cassette containing Tansen's song.

— **Abhijit C. Chandra**





## Builder of the first motor car



It is said of Henry Ford that one day, as he was driving along, he found a man trying to start his motor car that had broken down on the road. Ford stopped, got down from his car and went up to him. He asked him what the matter was and listened to his version how the car had got stalled. Without hesitating for a moment, Ford took off his coat, lay flat beneath the car, took a good look at the parts, stood up, opened the bonnet and tightened some screws here and there. He then asked the man to get in and start the engine. It roared, as he stepped on the accelerator. He came out beaming. While thanking the good Samaritan profusely, he asked for his name. Henry Ford answered, and added a word of advice. "Before you drive a Ford, you should know

its mechanism." Remember, Henry Ford was the founder-owner of Ford Motors and was one of America's first multi-millionaires.

He was born in 1863 into a farming family. Like the telephone and typewriter, the motor car was then unknown. While still in school, Henry was repairing clocks and watches, though he did not get much time for his hobby after his work on their farm—cutting wood, milking the cattle, and harnessing horses. He was hardly twelve when he was even ploughing and doing all man-sized jobs on the farm. Science was then not a part of the curriculum, but he acquired considerable mechanical knowledge through experience.

Engines really fascinated him. One day, he saw a tractor chugging along the road. While the driver rested by the wayside, Henry studied the mechanism. He had seen the railway engine. Now this was the second self-propelled vehicle he was seeing. He found that the tractor had a steam engine—like that of the railway engine. Henry began thinking of "an engine that will run by petrol and get it to do the work of the horse". Though not directly related with his statement, the engines used in four-wheelers and two-wheelers are usually described by their 'hp' or horse-power!

When he got married, Henry's father gifted him with a 40-acre land on which he built a house and set up a factory. In 1893, Henry visited the Chicago World Fair where he saw a petrol engine used for drawing water. He went home and resumed work on his plans to employ a petrol engine for running a "horseless carriage".

Next year, he moved to Detroit where, at the back of his house, he put up a brick shed to store petrol. He made a two-cylinder engine to propel a bicycle; the engine was too powerful for the two-wheeler. He then improvised it for the drive of a four-wheel carriage. The first motor car—a Ford—was thus built in that little brick shed. 'Tin-Lizzie' had its first trial run in May 1896.

Henry Ford died in 1947—when he was 84. He left a mighty industrial empire as well as the largest charitable trust in the world. The Ford Foundation is dedicated to the welfare of mankind.





## Cure For A Malady

**U**ma and Lakshmi were sisters; they were born just two years apart. Uma was a simple, innocent girl. She was not jealous of other girls of her age. But Lakshmi was just the opposite. She was envious of everybody and proud of her status. Given to fits of hot temper, she was haughty in dealing with others.

In looks, Lakshmi was beautiful. A wealthy man's son was attracted by her charms and proposed to her. Being the older girl, Uma's marriage was rushed through before Lakshmi's wedding took place. As a result, Uma got married to a boy from poor circumstances. Though not handsome, he was not ugly-looking. He had a job with the government in the city. The sisters left for their respective husband's houses soon after the wedding ceremonies.

As she had gone into a wealthy

family, Lakshmi lived in comfort. Soon she was curious to know what kind of life her sister lived. Not that she had any worry about her sister, but Lakshmi would not like it very much if she were to find that Uma, too, lived in comfort. But the fact was that Uma was happy in her husband's house, and Lakshmi came to know of this, and she was bitten by jealousy. One day, she persuaded her husband to take her to Uma's house.

It was an ordinary house devoid of any signs of affluence. Lakshmi was surprised that the walls were bare with no portraits or artefacts. The house was not spacious like her own. In spite of all that, Uma appeared quite happy and contented, much to the surprise of Lakshmi. Her husband also felt the same way.

Uma's husband was interested in music and literature. He used to in-

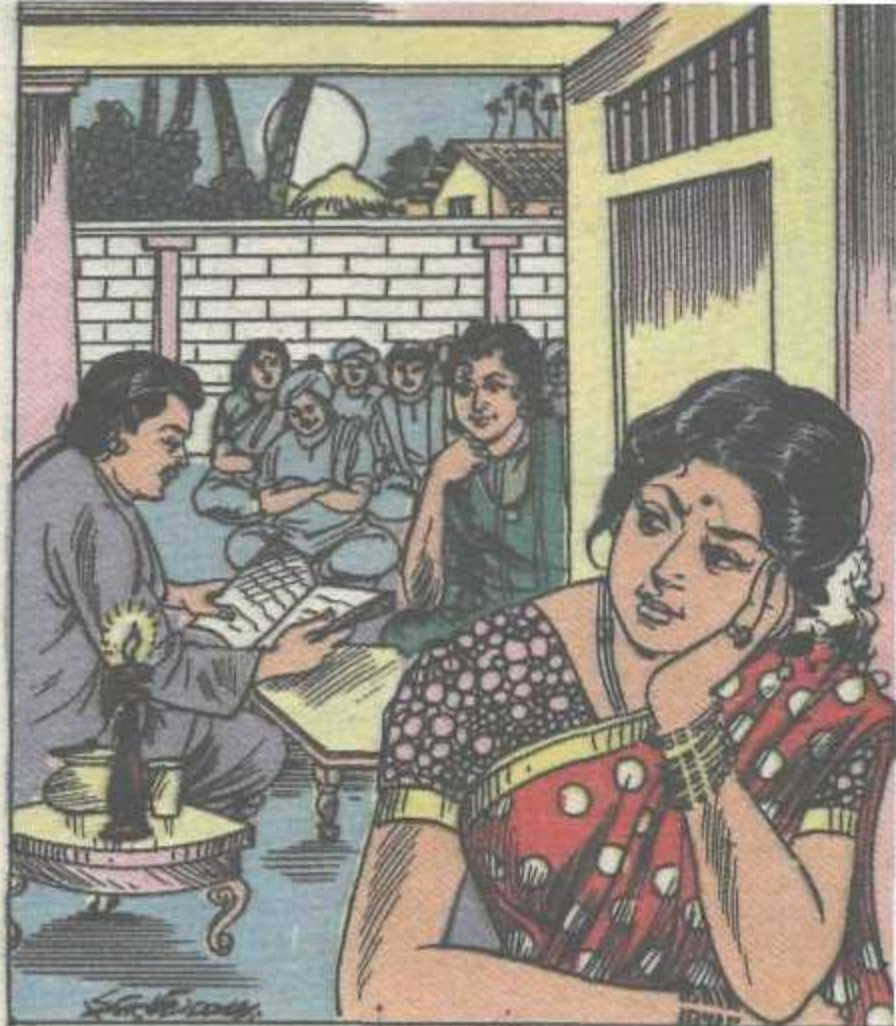


vite his friends in the evenings and enter into discussions with them or listen to their music or compositions. Sometimes, these gatherings would attract the neighbours; they all held him in high esteem. This heartened Uma, and when Lakshmi found this out, she told her husband about it.

Goaded by her, one day he too went to attend the literary discussions at Uma's place. He took an active part in the dialogues and even offered new and novel explanations. Everybody praised him. "Do you have similar gatherings in your town?" They enquired with him.

"I'm afraid no," said Lakshmi's husband, regretfully. "But I'm very much interested in such discussions. I wish I could hold similar meetings in my house. Unfortunately, I don't get any time for these things. I've to devote all my time to our business. Many people come to me for advice; and our dealings run into lakhs and lakhs of rupees. I can't leave all that and spare time for anything else. If you keep reading books regularly, you can acquire literary knowledge. But you can't acquire business acumen by merely reading."

"What you say is correct," some people in the gathering agreed.



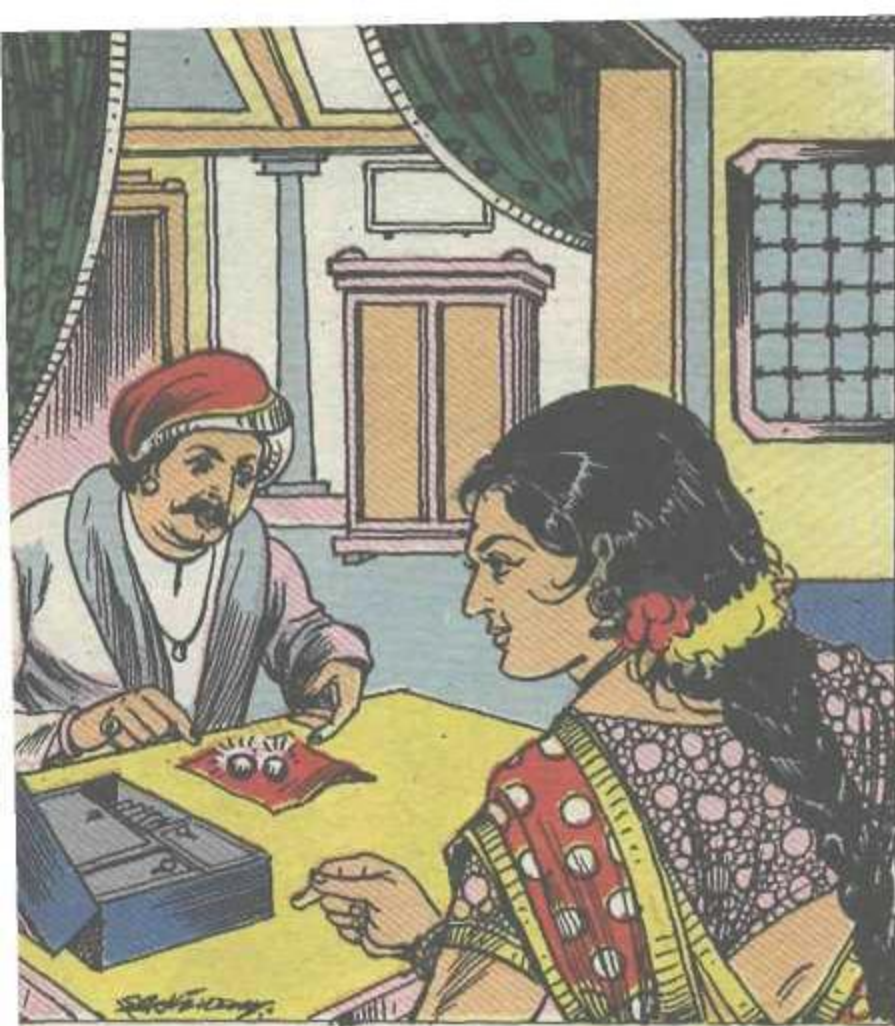
"Only those who have a lot of time to spare can indulge in these things. His time is very precious," commented Uma's husband in praise of his brother-in-law.

Uma had in her possession an ancient idol. She got it when the courtyard at the back of her house was dug for a well. The antique was a lovely work of art. Many people wished to buy it and made offers to Uma, but she did not want to part with it. However, she welcomed those who visited her house to see the idol.

Lakshmi and her husband came to Uma's house on another visit and







stayed with her for four days. Before returning they invited Uma and her husband over to their place. "Of course, we'll come, but not immediately. We shall come some days later. We would like to bring a gift for you, suitable to your tastes and status. Right now, we can't afford anything costly. But if you wish to have anything from here, do tell me, I'll gladly give it to you," responded Uma.

"You've that antique idol with you," said Lakshmi, casually. "I liked it. If you so wish, you may give that to me."

Uma immediately went inside and

brought the idol and gladly gave it to her sister. Lakshmi was immensely pleased, but not her husband. He chided her after they got back home. "Why did you ask for the idol? What use do you have for that ancient thing? After all, I'm meeting all your requirements and getting you whatever you wish for. By gifting the idol, Uma is now one up on you."

"I don't want to see anything that we have in anybody else's possession. I can't tolerate it. This antique is now with me, and nobody has anything like that. And nobody here in this town knows that I've got it from Uma. People will only compliment me for acquiring it."

A few days later, Uma and her husband came to Lakshmi's house. She took them round and showed them her collection of curios and boasted of her acquisitions. Uma was glad to see her sister leading a happy life.

After some days, it was time for Uma and husband to return to their town. A trader called on Lakshmi's husband and said, "I've with me two precious pearls. They're priced ten thousand coins each. I've brought them to show you. If you buy one, I propose to sell the other to the king."





Lakshmi took the pearls in her hand admired them. "If you assure us that these are the only ones of their kind, we shall take both of them. Nobody else should possess pearls similar to them."

"Madam, I got these pearls with diffienlty and from a far-away country," the trader assured her. "I knew that only the King and you will be interested in them or will be able to afford them. So, I didn't show them to anybody. Only you how seen them till now." The trader gave both pearls to her, collected the money from Lakshmi's husband and went away.

All this happened in the presence of Uma and her husband. To Uma, she gave only a simple, common sari as a gift. After they a left, Lakshmi passed the days contented that she was leading a happier life than her sister. She had no doubt that there was nobody more fortunate than herself. She decided not to tire herself with work. So, she stopped attending to the daily chores and confined herself to eating and sleeping away all the time. So much so, in no time did she grow fat and begin looking uncouth. A doubt nagged her. 'Uma is very lean. Is she more beautiful than I?' The thought wor-



ried her. She consulted a doctor for advice to reduce her size. "You've acquired a lot of unnecessary fat. It'll affect your health, and you won't be able to move your limbs freely. You must eat less food and engage yourself in some work. You must also do some exercises every day."

Uma heard that her sister was under treatment. She called on Lakshmi who, on seeing her sister, was very happy. Her face brightened up. She was happy not because of Uma's affection for her, but Uma, too, was growing fat! "What's this, Uma?" she queried. "You must be careful; see, you're putting on fat!"







Uma guessed that Lakshmi was only happy because she too has become fat. Her doctor told Uma that Lakshmi would have to be under medication for several days. She persuaded her sister to go with her, so that she could have complete rest.

When the two sisters reached Uma's place, her husband guessed what exactly was Lakshmi's illness.

"If your sister needs to reduce her obesity, *you* should first reduce your fat," he told Uma. "I can see that she is happy that you are also equally fat. She must be thinking, why then should *she* reduce her fat? If you cut down on your food and reduce your fat, she would compete with you and try to reduce her fat as well,"

"I'll do anything for my younger

sister," said Uma. She began eating less and less of food and doing exercises. By and by she became lean once again.

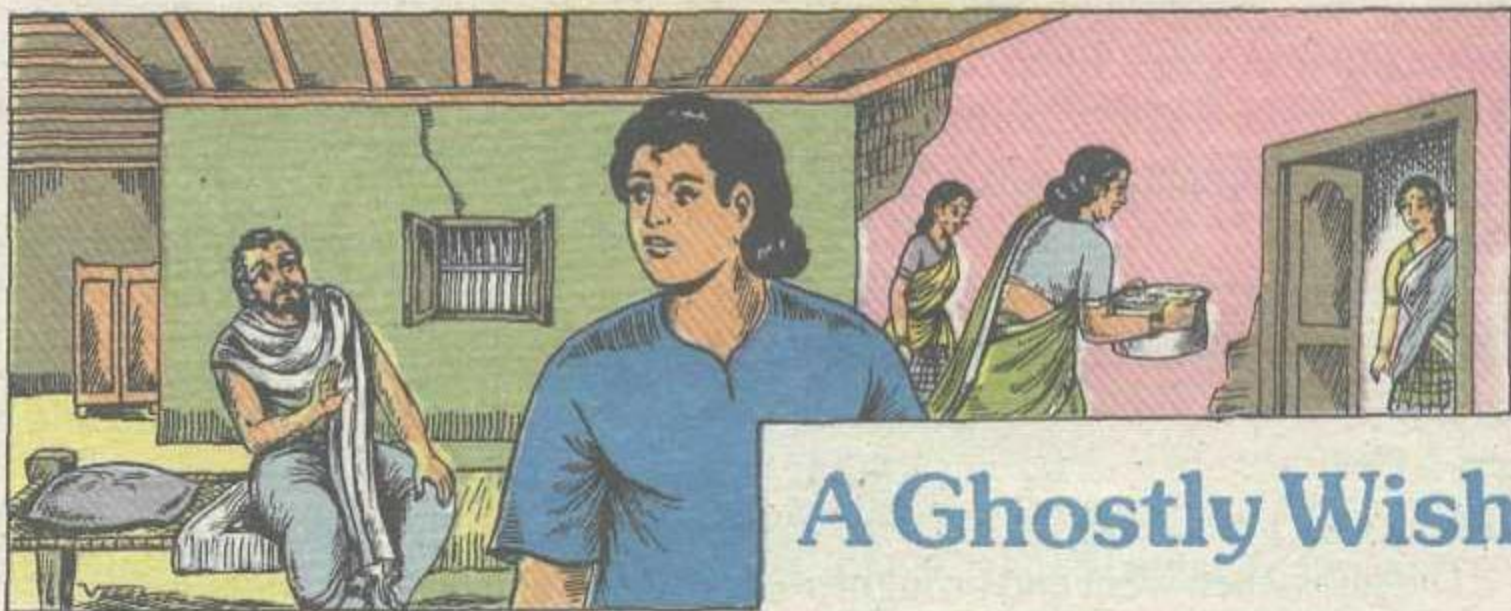
Just as her husband had guessed, Lakshmi vied with Uma in taking less food and doing exercises. She was glad that like her sister, she too was becoming lean. She now looked as beautiful as she was when she got married.

After Lakshmi went back to her town, Uma's husband commented, "What do you say about my advice? I was able to understand her real illness—jealousy! She is now happy that she is once again looking beautiful. Anyway I'm glad my wife is not suffering from that malady!" Uma coyly smiled at him.

**The countenance is the index of the mind**

**Great souls suffer in silence**





## A Ghostly Wish

Unlike his friends, Ponnu had to bear the burden of his entire family, as he was the sole earning member. His father was bed-ridden, and needed all kinds of medicines and treatment. He had to buy clothes for his mother and sisters; they had to be given away in marriage. Besides, their old house required a lot of repair. At no time did he have enough money to meet all these expenses.

Ponnu was an intelligent young man and tried his best to solve his financial difficulties. Though he was always short of money, he had no hesitation in going to the help of others. In fact, he always gave priority to the problems of others, and had little or no time to take care of his own difficulties.

Advice was not lacking how to earn money through short-cut methods. But he rejected them whenever his friends brought forth suggestions, especially because his father used to

caution him: "You should not lose heart even if you face the severest of problems. Don't cheat anybody; don't give up honesty and integrity," was the old man's advice.

Ponnu realised that he would have to shift to the nearest town if he had to make better earnings. On his way, he had to pass through a forest. Towards mid-day, he felt tired and rested beneath a shaded tree. He did not know that a ghost had made the tree its home. And it was feeling lonely. But when it saw Ponnu, it felt happy. It jumped down from the tree and stood in front of Ponnu. "Don't be scared; I won't harm you. I don't get any company, with whom I can talk to. Now that you've come, I'm happy. Would you mind telling me some stories? You don't have to do it free, I shall give you money."

Ponnu was not at all afraid of the ghost. He narrated the story of a thief who was given to remorse and was



reformed. The ghost liked the story. "I would request you to remain here and keep me company forever," it told him.

"I certainly don't mind," said Ponnu. "But I've certain commitments. Only if I'm able to meet them can I free myself and be with you, without any botheration."

The ghost then went and brought a bagful of gold coins. "Take this, and attend to your problems. After completing your work, you must come back to me. I shall wait for you."

Ponnu went back to his place with the money given by the ghost. He arranged for the treatment of his father; he bought clothes for his mother and sisters, and repaired his house. He

then returned to the forest, and the moment he sat down beneath the tree, the ghost joined him.

This time Ponnu narrated the story of a king and queen. The ghost keenly listened to the story and was about to ask for another story when Ponnu told him: "The money you gave me was not enough for my sisters' wedding."

"Don't worry about money; I shall give you enough," said the ghost. "Whatever you need I shall give you, but on one condition. After you perform their marriages, you must come back to me and never leave me alone." The ghost gave him two bags of gold coins.

Ponnu conducted his sisters' wedding and with the money left, he bought





a piece of land which would meet the daily needs of his father and mother. Now it was time for him to return to the forest. He decided that if he had to keep company with the ghost forever, he too had to become a ghost. He had no heart to cheat the ghost. So, he climbed to the top of a rocky hill with a view to taking his own life. As he was about to climb to the highest point to jump down from, he saw a beautiful girl. He was quite taken aback.

She was Mangamma, who did not want to suffer the torments of her step-mother and had come there to end her life, before she was forcibly given in marriage to an old man. All this was revealed when they started enquiring about each other.

"Good people will get entry into heaven," said Mangamma. "You'll never become a ghost, and remain on earth. So, you would better marry me and help me to live."

"I'm ready to marry you,

Mangamma," said Ponnu. "But I can't forsake the ghost who came to my help when I needed it very badly. I must fulfil its wish."

"There's a way out, Ponnu," said the girl. "We shall get married and stay beneath the same tree, where we shall put up a hut. And you can continue to keep company with the ghost."

Ponnu felt that Mangamma's suggestion was practical. They worshipped the Almighty in their mind and wed each other. They then moved over to the tree where the ghost lived. It appeared before them — not as a ghost, but somebody looking like a divine being. "I was under a curse and had become a ghost. By my association with an honest person, I've been freed from that curse. May you both live long and lead a happy life." The divine figure blessed them. He gave each of them a bagful of gold coins.

Ponnu took Mangamma home where they lived with his parents.





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# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S.G. Seshagiri



S.G. Seshagiri

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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Picks from the wise :

The bird a nest; the spider a web; man friendship.

– William Blake

People who do not believe in miracles are not realists.

– David Ben-Gurion

Mistakes are to life what shadows are to light.

– Ernest Junger





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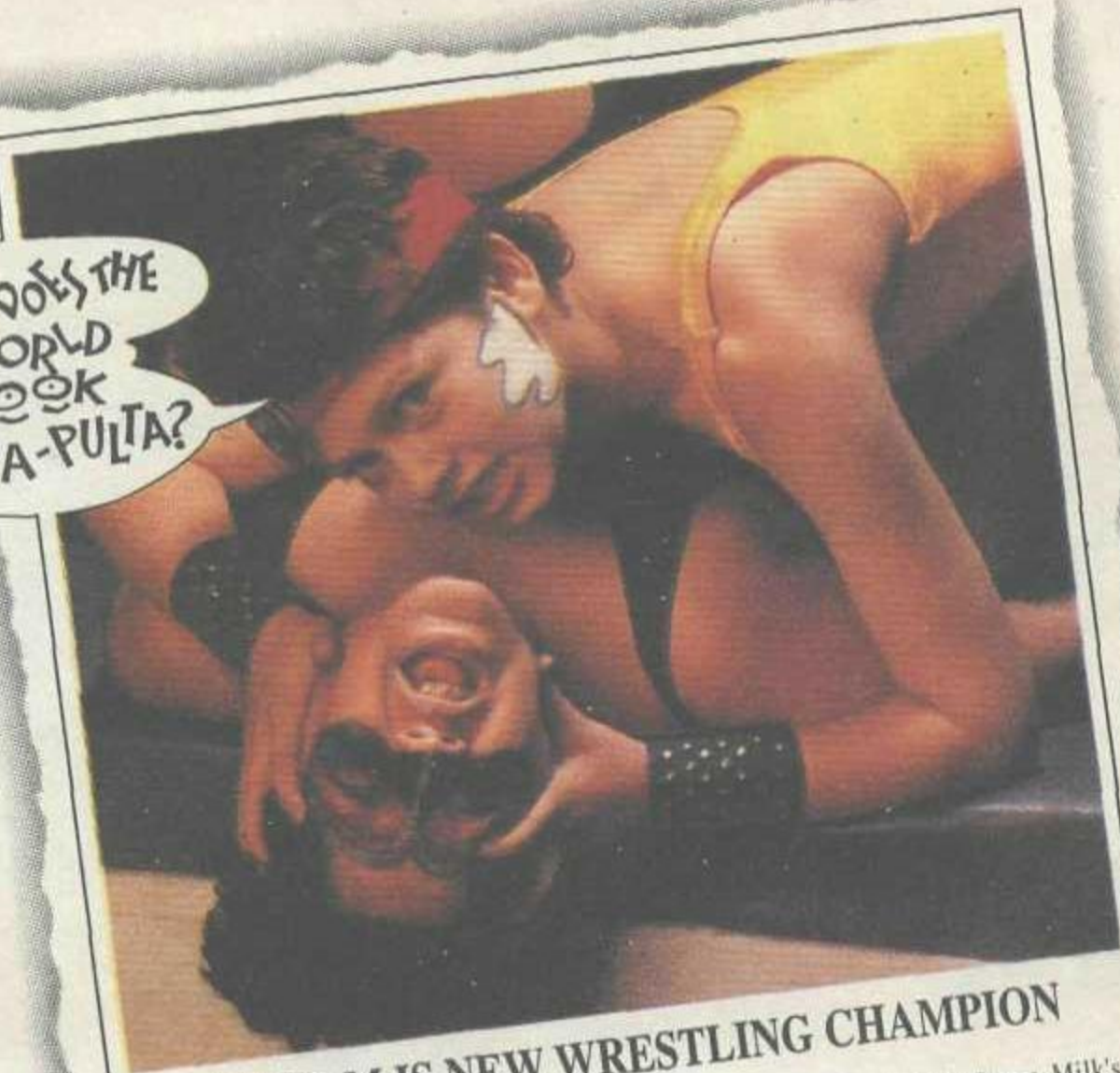
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## SUPER M IS NEW WRESTLING CHAMPION

By our special correspondent  
Bombay, OCTOBER 1994: "Ha !  
finally he's tasted my super  
strength", roared Super M  
after he pinned Slippery  
Sultan to the mat for a 3 count

to become the new Wrestling  
Champion. He victoriously  
pulled out a pack of Super  
Milk biscuits and crunched  
into one. With a wink he told  
his fans, "Luckily he didn't

know about Super Milk's  
super strength and super taste.  
Or else..." and he winked  
again. He continued, "Next  
time he better be prepared...  
Challenge Ke Saath!"

CHALLENGE KE SAATH!



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